

VESTIGIA ARANEAEE ~ ORACULA FRACTA ~

PROJECT ANGELBOOK ~ VOLUME IX ~ PART 23



EZEKIEL REDIK YARBROUGH®

Vestigia Araneae – Oracula Fracta
– Project AngelBook – Volume IX -
Part 23
By Ezekiel Redik Yarbrough -
(DBM ECLIPZE)

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deleted, some only accessible through mirror networks or deep
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web. Many of these links were discovered in abandoned onion lists,
dead forum dumps, or
esoteric directories tucked into archived darknet files.

These pastes were never meant to last.
Some were deleted within hours of being
posted.

Others were buried under thousands of lines of spam, encrypted
scripts, or meaningless
noise.

But buried in the noise were real transmissions: occult formulas,
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anonymous rants from souls
who had either touched something unspeakable—or were trying to.

I did not write any of this.

I did not censor, edit, or “correct” it.

I simply retrieved it, cleaned
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never be wiped again.

This is Pastebin as Scripture.

The chan-post as Codex.

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Let this serve as both evidence and artifact:

a living record of the madness, brilliance,
paranoia, and revelation that once flowed through anonymous
paste sites—before it was deemed
too strange to index, too dangerous to preserve, or too fractured to
matter.

Now it matters.

Now it’s immortal.

round about thee to protect thee, O brother Osiris. I have come to be a protector unto thee. [My strength shall be near thee, my strength shall be near thee, for ever. Ra hath heard thy cry, and the gods have made thy word to be truth. Thou art raised up. Thy word is truth in respect of what hath been done unto thee. Ptah hath overthrown thy foes, and thou art Horus, the son of Hathor.]

The Speech of the Tet: I have come quickly, and I have driven back the footsteps of the god whose face is hidden. I have illumined his sanctuary. I stand near the god Tet on the day of repelling disaster. I watch to protect thee, O Osiris.

The Speech of Kesta (Mesta): I am Kesta, thy son, O Osiris Ani, whose word is truth. I come to protect thee. I will make thy house to flourish, permanently, even as Ptah hath commanded me, and as Ra himself hath commanded.

The Speech of Hapi: I am Hapi, thy son, O Osiris Ani, whose word is truth. I come to protect thee. I bind together thy head and the members of thy body. I smite down for thee thine enemies under thee. I give unto thee thy head for ever and for ever, O Osiris Ani, whose word is truth, whose word is truth in peace.

The Speech of Tuamutef: Tuamutef saith:- I am thy son Horus, who loveth thee. I come to avenge thee, O my father Osiris, upon him that did evil unto thee. I have set him under thy feet for ever and for ever, permanently, permanently, O Osiris Ani, whose word is truth, whose word is truth.

The Speech of Qebhsenuf: Qebhsenuf saith:- I am thy son, O Osiris Ani, whose word is truth. I come to protect thee. I have collected thy bones and I have gathered together thy members. [I have brought thy heart, and I have placed it upon its throne within thy body. I make thy house to flourish after thee, O thou who livest for ever.]

The Speech of the Flame: I protect thee with this flame. I drive him [the foe] away from the valley of the tomb. I cast the sand about [thy feet]. I embrace the Osiris Ani, whose word is truth, in peace.

The Speech of the Flame: I come to hew in pieces. I have not been hewn in pieces, and I will not permit thee to be hewn in pieces. I come to do violence [to thy foe], but I will not permit violence to be done unto thee. I protect thee.

A Soul Saith:- The Osiris Ani, whose word is truth, praiseth Ra when he rolleth up into the sky in the eastern horizon of heaven.

A Soul Saith:- The Osiris Ani, whose word is truth, in peace in Khert- Neter, praiseth Ra when he setteth in the western horizon of heaven, [and saith], "I am a perfect soul."

The Speech of Ani: The Osiris Ani, whose word is truth, saith:- I am a perfect soul dwelling in the divine egg of the Abtu Fish. I am the Great Cat which dwelleth in the Seat of Truth, wherein the god Shu riseth.

The Speech of the Ushabti Figure [The Chapter of Not Doing Work in Khert-Neter: Illumine the Osiris Ani, whose word is truth. Hail, Shabti Figure! If the Osiris Ani be decreed to do any of the work which is to be done in Khert-Neter, let everything which standeth in the way be removed from him- whether it be to plough the fields, or to fill the channels with water, or to carry sand from [the East to the West]. The Shabti Figure replieth: I will do it, verily I am here [when] thou callest.

[Here] Being the Chapters of Sekhet-Hetepet, and the Chapters of Coming Forth by Day, of Entering Into and Coming Forth from Khert-NEter, of Arriving in Sekhet-Aanru, and of Leving in Peace in the Great City, the Lady of Winds: [The Osiris the scribe Ani, whose word is truth, saith:-] Let me be master there. Let me be a khu there. Let me plough there. Let me reap there. Let me eat there. Let me drink there. [Let me beget there]. Let me do there all the things which one doeth upon earth. The Osiris Ani, whose word is truth, saith:- Horus vanquished Set when [he] looked at the building of Sekhet-Hetepet. [He] spread air over the Divine Soul in its Egg, in its day. He delivered the interior of the body of Horus [from the Akeru Gods]. I have crowned him in the House of Shu. His house is the stars. Behold, I take up my place in its nomes. He hath guided the hearts of the Company of the Firstborn Gods. He hath reconciled the Two Fighters (Horus and Set), the guardians of life. He hath done what is fair, bringing an offering. He hath reconciled the Two Fighters with him that belongeth to them. He hath cut off the hairy scalp of the Two Fighters. He hath destroyed the revolts of [their] children. I have done away all the evil which attacked their souls. I am master in [Sekhet-Hetepet]. I know it. I have sailed over its lakes that I might arrive at the cities thereof. I have made strong my mouth. The Spirit-souls are ready [to fight], but they shall not gain the mastery over me. I am equipped in thy Fields, O god Hetep. What thou wishest thou shalt do, [saith this god].

The Osiris Ani, whose word is truth, saith:- Homage to thee, O Ra, the Lord of Truth, the Only One, the Lord of Eternity and Maker of Everlastingness. I have come before thee, O my Lord Ra. I would make to flourish the Seven Cows and their Bull. O ye who give cakes and ale to the Spirit-souls, grant ye that my soul may be with you. Let him be born on your thighs. Let him be like unto one of you for ever and for ever. Let the Osiris Ani, whose word is truth, have glorious power in the Beautiful Amentet.

The Names of the Seven Holy Cows and their Bull: 1. Het-Kau Nebtertcher. 2. Akertkhentetasts. 3. Khebitetsahneter. 4. Urmertusteshertshenti. 5. Khnemtemankhanuit. 6. Sekhmetrensemabats. 7. Shenatpetuthestneter. Bull: Kathaihemt.

Hail, thou Beautiful Power, thou Beautiful Rudder of the Northern Heaven. Hail, thou who circlest, Guide of the Two Lands, Beautiful Rudder of the Western Heaven. Hail, Splendour, Dweller in the temple of the Ashemu gods, Beautiful Rudder of the Eastern Heaven. Hail, Dweller in the temple of the Red gods, Beautiful Rudder of the Southern Heaven.

Hail, ye gods who are above the earth, ye Guides of the Tuat. Hail, ye Mother-goddesses, who are above the earth in Khert-Neter, in the House of Osiris. Hail,

ye gods who guide Ta-tchesert, who are above the earth and are guides of the Tuat.
Hail, ye Followers of Ra, who follow in the train of Osiris.

Hymn to Osiris Khenti-Amenti Un-Nefer: The Osiris Ani, whose word is truth, praiseth
Osiris Khenti-Amenti Un- Nefer, and saith:- Hail, my Lord, who dost hasten through
eternity, whose existence is for ever, Lord of Lords, King of Kings, Sovereign, God of
the Gods, who live in their shrines,.... gods.... men. Make thou for me a seat with those
who are in Khert-Neter, who adore the forms of thy KA, and who traverse millions of
millions of years..... May no delay arise for thee in Ta-mera. Let them come to thee, all
of them, great as well as small. May this god give the power to enterin and to come forth
from Khert-Neter, without repulse, at any door of the Tuat, to the KA of the Osiris Ani.

The Chapter of the Praise of Hathor, Lady of Amentet: Hathor, Lady of Amentet, the
Dweller in the Great Land, the Lady of Ta-Tchesert, the Eye of Ra, the Dweller in his
breast, the Beautiful Face in the Boat of Millions of Years, the Seat of Peace of the doer
of truth, Dweller in the Boat of the favoured ones.....

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Notes to the Thirty-Two Paths of Wisdom

The Sepher Yetzirah

The Sepher Yetzirah

Translated from the Hebrew by William Wynn Westcott

(NOTE: The Sepher Yetzirah is one of the most famous of the ancient Qabalistic texts. It was first put into writing around 200 C.E. Westcott's Translation of the Sepher Yetzirah was a primary source for the rituals and Knowledge Lectures of the Golden Dawn. This is the Third Edition of Westcott's translation, first published in 1887. A Fourth Revised Edition of the Sepher Yetzirah by Darcy Kúntz, complete with Hebrew text, notes and bibliography, is available from Holmes Publishing Group, P.O. 623, Edmonds, WA 98020.)

INTRODUCTION

The "Sepher Yetzirah," or "Book of Formation," is perhaps the oldest Rabbinical treatise of Kabalistic philosophy which is still extant. The great interest which has been evinced of late years in the Hebrew Kabalah, and the modes of thought and doctrine allied to it, has induced me to translate this tractate from the original Hebrew texts, and to collate with them the Latin versions of mediaeval authorities; and I have also published An Introduction to the Kabalah which may be found useful to students.

Three important books of the "Zohar," or "Book of Splendour," which is a great storehouse of Kabalistic teaching, have been translated into English by S. L. MacGregor Mathers, and the "Sepher Yetzirah" in an English translation is almost a necessary companion to these abstruse disquisitions: the two books indeed mutually explain each other.

The "Sepher Yetzirah," although this name means "The Book of Formation," is not in any sense a narrative of Creation, or a substitute Genesis, but is an ancient and instructive philosophical treatise upon one aspect of the origin of the universe and

mankind; an aspect at once archaic and essentially Hebrew. The grouping of the processes of origin into an arrangement, at once alphabetic and numeral, is one only to be found in Semitic authors.

Attention must be called to the essential peculiarity of the Hebrew language, the inextricable and necessary association of numbers and letters; every letter suggesting a number, and every group of letters having a numerical signification, as vital as its literal meaning.

The Kabbalistic principles involved in the reversal of Hebrew letters, and their substitution by others, on definite schemes, should also be studied and borne in mind.

It is exactly on these principles that the "ground-work idea" of this disquisition rests; and these principles may be traced throughout the Kabbalistic tractates which have succeeded it in point of time and development, many of which are associated together in one volume known as the "Zohar," which is in the main concerned with the essential dignities of the Godhead, with the Emanations which have sprung therefrom, with the doctrine of the Sephiroth, the ideals of Macroprosopus and Microprosopus, and the doctrine of Re-incarnation.

The "Sepher Yetzirah," on the other hand, is mainly concerned with our universe and with the Microcosm. The opinions of Hebrew Kabbalistic Rabbis and of modern mystics may be fitly introduced here.

The following interesting quotation is from Rabbi Moses Botarel, who wrote his famous Commentary in 1409:—"It was Abraham our Father—blessed be he—who wrote this book to condemn the doctrine of the sages of his time, who were incredulous of the supreme dogma of the Unity. At least, this was the opinion of Rabbi Saadiah—blessed be he—as written in the first chapter of his book The Philosopher's Stone. These are his words: The sages of Babylon attacked Abraham on account of his faith; for they were all against him although themselves separable into three sects. The First thought that the Universe was subject to the control of two opposing forces, the one existing but to destroy the other, this is dualism; they held that there was nothing in common between the author of evil and the author of good. The Second sect admitted Three great Powers; two of them as in the first case, and a third Power whose function was to decide between the two others, a supreme arbitrator. The Third sect recognised no god beside the Sun, in which it recognised the sole principle of existence."

Rabbi Judah Ha Lévi (who flourished about 1120), in his critical description of this treatise, wrote: "The Sepher Yetzirah teaches us the existence of a Single Divine Power by shewing us that in the bosom of variety and multiplicity there is a Unity and Harmony, and that such universal concord could only arise from the rule of a Supreme Unity."

According to Isaac Myer, in his Quabbalah (p. 159), the "Sepher Yetzirah" was referred to in the writings of Ibn Gebirol of Cordova, commonly called Avicbron, who died in A.D. 1070.

Eliphas Levi, the famous French Occultist, thus wrote of the “Sepher Yetzirah,” in his *Histoire de la Magie*, p. 54: “The Zohar is a Genesis of illumination, the Sepher Jezirah is a ladder formed of truths. Therein are explained the thirty-two absolute signs of sounds, numbers and letters: each letter reproduces a number, an idea and a form; so that mathematics are capable of application to ideas and to forms not less rigorously than to numbers, by exact proportion and perfect correspondence. By the science of the Sepher Jezirah the human spirit is fixed to truth, and in reason, and is able to take account of the possible development of intelligence by the evolutions of numbers. The Zohar represents absolute truth, and the Sepher Jezirah provides the means by which we may seize, appropriate and make use of it.”

Upon another page Eliphas Lévi writes: “The Sepher Jezirah and the Apocalypse are the masterpieces of Occultism; they contain more wisdom than words; their expression is as figurative as poetry, and at the same time it is as exact as mathematics.

In the volume entitled *La Kabbale* by the eminent French scholar, Adolphe Franck, there is a chapter on the “Sepher Yetzirah.” He writes as follows:—

“The Book of Formation contains, I will not say system of physics, but of cosmology such as could be conceived at an age and in a country where the habit of explaining all phenomena by the immediate action of the First Cause, tended to check the spirit of observation, and where in consequence certain general and superficial relations perceived in the natural world passed for the science of Nature.”...“Its form is simple and grave; there is nothing like a demonstration nor an argument; but it consists rather of a series of aphorisms, regularly grouped, and which have all the conciseness of the most ancient oracles.”

In his analysis of the “Sepher Yetzirah,” he adds:—“The Book of Formation, even if it be not very voluminous, and if it do not altogether raise us to very elevated regions of thought, yet offers us at least a composition which is very homogeneous and of a rare originality. The clouds which the imagination of commentators have gathered around it, will be dissipated, if we look for, in it, not mysteries of ineffable wisdom, but an attempt at a reasonable doctrine, made when reason arose, an effort to grasp the plan of the universe, and to secure the link which binds to one common principle, all the elements which are around us.”

“The last word of this system is the substitution of the absolute divine Unity for every idea of Dualism, for that pagan philosophy which saw in matter an eternal substance whose laws were not in accord with Divine Will; and for the Biblical doctrine, which by its idea of Creation, postulates two things, the Universe and God, as two substances absolutely distinct one from the other.

“In fact, in the 'Sepher Yetzirah,' God considered as the Infinite and consequently the indefinable Being, extended throughout all things by his power and existence, is while above, yet not outside of numbers, sounds and letters—the principles and general laws which we recognise.”

“Every element has its source from a higher form, and all things have their common origin from the Word (Logos), the Holy Spirit.... So God is at once, in the highest sense, both the matter and the form of the universe. Yet He is not only that form; for nothing can or does exist outside of Himself; His substance is the foundation of all, and all things bear His imprint and are symbols of His intelligence.”

Hebrew tradition assigns the doctrines of the oldest portions of the “Zohar” to a date antecedent to the building of the Second Temple, but Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai, who lived in the reign of the Emperor Titus, A.D. 70-80, is considered to have been the first to commit these to writing, and Rabbi Moses de Leon, of Guadalaxara, in Spain, who died in 1305, certainly reproduced and published the “Zohar.”

Ginsburg, speaking of the Zoharic doctrines of the Ain Suph, says that they were unknown until the thirteenth century, but he does not deny the great antiquity of the “Sepher Yetzirah,” in which it will be noticed the “Ain Suph Aur” and “Ain Suph” are not mentioned. I suggest, however, that this omission is no proof that the doctrines of “Ain Suph Aur” and “Ain Suph” did not then exist, because it is a reasonable supposition that the “Sepher Yetzirah” was the volume assigned to the Yetziratic World, the third of the four Kabalistic Worlds of Emanation, while the “Asch Metzareph” is concerned with the Assiatic, fourth, or lowest World of Shells, and is on the face of it an alchemical treatise; and again the “Siphra Dtzenioutha” may be fittingly considered to be an Aziluthic work, treating of the Emanations of Deity alone; and there was doubtless a fourth work assigned to the World of Briah—the second type, but I have not been able to identify this treatise. Both the Babylonian and the Jerusalem Talmuds refer to the “Sepher Yetzirah.” Their treatise, named “Sanhedrin,” certainly mentions the “Book of Formation,” and another similar work; and Rashi in his commentary on the treatise “Erubin,” considers this a reliable historical notice. Other historical notices are those of Saadya Gaon, who died A.D. 940, and Judah Ha Levi, A.D. 1150; both these Hebrew classics speak of it as a very ancient work. Some modern critics have attributed the authorship to the Rabbi Akiba, who lived in the time of the Emperor Hadrian, A.D. 120, and lost his life in supporting the claims of Barchocheba, a false messiah: others suggest it was first written about A.D. 200.

Graetz however assigns it to early Gnostic times, third or fourth century, and Zunz speaks of it as post Talmudical, and belonging to the Geonim period 700-800 A.D.; Rubensohn, in the Bibliotheca Sacra, speaks of this latter idea as having no real basis.

The Talmuds were first collected into a concrete whole, and printed in Venice, 1520 A.D.

The “Zohar” was first printed in Mantua in 1558; again in Cremona, 1560; and at Lublin, 1623; and a fourth edition by Knorr von Rosenroth, at Sulzbach in 1684. Some parts are not very ancient, because the Crusades are mentioned in one chapter. Six extant Hebrew editions of the “Sepher Yetzirah” were collected and printed at Lemberg in 1680. The oldest of these six recensions was that of Saadjah Gaon (by some critics called spurious). There are still extant three Latin versions, viz., that of Gulielmus Postellus; one by Johann Pistorius; and a third by Joannes Stephanus Rittangelius; this

latter gives both Hebrew and Latin versions, and also "The Thirty-Two Paths" as a supplement.

There is a German translation, by Johann Friedrich von Meyer, dated 1830; a version by Isidor Kalisch, in which he has reproduced many of the valuable annotations of Meyer; an edition in French by Papus, 1888; an edition in French by Mayer Lambert, 1891, with the Arabic Commentary of Saadya Gaon; and an English edition by Peter Davidson, 1896, to which are added "The Fifty Gates of Intelligence" and "The Thirty-Two Ways of Wisdom." The edition which I now offer is fundamentally that of the ancient Hebrew codices translated into English, and collated with the Latin versions of Pistorius, Postellus, and Rittangelius, following the latter, rather than the former commentators. As to the authenticity of "The Sepher Yetzirah," students may refer to the Bibliotheca magna Rabbinica of Bartoloccio de Cellerio, Rome, 1678-1692; to Basnage, History of the Jews, 1708; and to The Doctrine and Literature of the Kabbalah, by A. B. Waite, 1902. The following copies of the "Sepher Yetzirah" in Hebrew, I have also examined, but only in a superficial manner:—

1. A Version by Saadia, Ab. ben David, and three others, Mantua, 1562, 4to.
2. A Version with the commentary of Rabbi Abraham F. Dior, Amsterdam, 1642, 4to.
3. A Version with preface by M. ben J. Chagiz, Amsterdam, 1713, 16mo. 4. A Version, Constantinople, 1719, 8vo.
5. " " Zolkiew, 1745, 4to.
6. " " by Moses ben Jacob, Zozec, 1779, 4to.
7. " " Grodno, 1806, 4to.
8. " " Dyhernfurth, 1812, 8vo.
9. " " Salonica, 1831, 8vo.
10. A MS. copy dated 1719, in the British Museum.

I add here the full titles of the three Latin versions; they are all to be found in the British Museum Library.

"Abrahami Patriarchae Liber Jezirah sive Formationis Mundi, Patribus quidem Abrahami tempora praecedentibus revelatus, sed ab ipso etiam Abrahamo expositus Isaaco, et per pro prophetarum manus posteritati conservatus, ipsis autem 72 Mosis auditoribus in secundo divinae veritatis loco, hoc est in ratione, quoe est posterior autoritate, habitus." Parisiis, 1552. Gulielmus Postellus. "Id est Liber Jezirah, qui Abrahamo, Patriarchae adscribitur, una cum Commentario Rabbi Abraham F.D. super 32 semitis Sapientiae, a quibus Liber Jezirah incipit: Translatus et notis illustratus a Joanne Stephano Rittangelio, Ling. Orient. in Elect. Acad. Regiomontana Prof. Extraord,"

Amstelodami, 1642. In Tomas Primus of "Artis Cabalisticae hoc est reconditae theologiae et philosophiae scriptorum." Basileae 1587, is found "Liber de Creatione Cabalisticis, Hebraice Sepher Jezira; Authore Abrahamo. Successive filiis ore traditus. Hinc jam rebus Israel inclinatis ne deficeret per sapientes Hierusalem arcanis et profundissimis sensibus literis commendatus." Johannes Pistorius.

The "Sepher Yetzirah" consists of six chapters, having 33 paragraphs distributed among them, in this manner: the first has 12, then follow 5, 5, 4, 3, and 4.

Yet in some versions the paragraphs and subject-matter are found in a different arrangement. The oldest title has, as an addition, the words, "The Letters of our Father Abraham" or "ascribed to the patriarch Abraham," and it is spoken of as such by many mediaeval authorities: but this origin is doubtless fabulous, although perhaps not more improbable than the supposed authorship of the "Book of Enoch," mentioned by St. Jude, of which two MSS. copies in the Ethiopic language were rescued from the wilds of Abyssinia in 1773 by the great traveller James Bruce. In essence this work was, doubtless, the crystallisation of centuries of tradition, by one writer, and it has been added to from time to time, by later authors, who have also revised it. Some of the additions, which were rejected even by mediaeval students, I have not incorporated with the text at all, and I present in this volume only the undoubted kernel of this occult nut, upon which many great authorities, Hebrew, German, Jesuit and others, have written long Commentaries, and yet have failed to explain satisfactorily. I find Kalisch, speaking of these Commentaries, says, "they contain nothing but a medley of arbitrary explanations, and sophistical distortions of scriptural verses, astrological notions, Oriental superstitions, a metaphysical jargon, a poor knowledge of physics, and not a correct elucidation of this ancient book." Kalisch, however, was not an occultist; these commentaries are, however, so extensive as to demand years of study, and I feel no hesitation in confessing that my researches into them have been but superficial. For convenience of study I have placed the Notes in a separate form at the end of the work, and I have made a short definition of the subject-matter of each chapter. The substance of this little volume was read as Lecture before "The Hermetic Society of London," in the summer of 1886, Dr. Anna Kingsford, President, in the chair. Some of the Notes were the explanations given verbally, and subsequently in writing, to members of the Society who asked for information upon abstruse points in the "Sepher," and for collateral doctrines; others, of later date, are answers which have been given to students of Theosophy and Hermetic philosophy, and to my pupils of the Study Groups of the Rosicrucian Society of England.

SEIPHER YETZIRAH

SEIPHER YETZIRAH

The Book of Formation

CHAPTER I

Section 1. In thirty-two (1) mysterious Paths of Wisdom did Jah, (2) the Jehovah of hosts, (3) the God of Israel, (4) the Living Elohim, (5) the King of ages, the merciful and gracious God, (6) the Exalted One, the Dweller in eternity, most high and holy—engrave his name by the three Sepharim (7) —Numbers, Letters, and Sounds.(8)

2. Ten are the ineffable Sephiroth. (9) Twenty-two are the Letters, the Foundation of all things; there are Three Mothers, Seven Double and Twelve (10) Simple letters.

3. The ineffable Sephiroth are Ten, as are the Numbers; and as there are in man five fingers over against five, so over them is established a covenant of strength, by word of mouth, and by the circumcision of the flesh. (11)

4. Ten is the number of the ineffable Sephiroth, ten and not nine, ten and not eleven. Understand this wisdom, and be wise by the perception. Search out concerning it, restore the Word to its creator, and replace Him who formed it upon his throne. (12)

5. The Ten ineffable Sephiroth have ten vast regions bound unto them; boundless in origin and having no ending; an abyss (13) of good and of ill; measureless height and depth; boundless to the East and the West; boundless to the North and South; (14) and the Lord the only God, (15) the Faithful King rules all these from his holy seat, (16) for ever and ever.

6. The Ten ineffable Sephiroth have the appearance of the Lightning flash, (17) their origin is unseen and no end is perceived. The Word is in them as they rush forth and as they return, they speak as from the whirl-wind, and returning fall prostrate in adoration before the Throne.

7. The Ten ineffable Sephiroth, whose ending is even as their origin, are like as a flame arising from a burning coal. For God (18) is superlative in his Unity, there is none equal unto Him: what number canst thou place before One.

8. Ten are the ineffable Sephiroth; seal up thy lips lest thou speak of them, and guard thy heart as thou considerest them; and if thy mind escape from thee bring it back to thy control; even as it was said, "running and returning" (the living creatures ran and returned) (19) and hence was the Covenant made.

9. The ineffable Sephiroth give forth the Ten numbers. First; the Spirit of the God of the living; (20) Blessed and more than blessed be the Living God (21) of ages. The Voice, the Spirit, and the Word, (22) these are the Holy Spirit.

10. Second; from the Spirit He produced Air, and formed in it twenty-two sounds—the letters; three are mothers, seven are double, and twelve are simple; but the Spirit is first and above these. Third; from the Air He formed the Waters, and from the formless and void (23) made mire and clay, and designed surfaces upon them, and hewed recesses in them, and formed the strong material foundation. Fourth; from the Water He formed Fire (24) and made for Himself a Throne of Glory with Auphanim, Seraphim and Kerubim, (25) as his ministering angels; and with these three (26) he completed his dwelling, as it is written, "Who maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flaming fire." (27)

11. He selected three letters from among the simple ones and sealed them and formed

them into a Great Name, I H V, (28) and with this He sealed the universe in six directions.

Fifth; He looked above, and sealed the Height with I H V.

Sixth; He looked below, and sealed the Depth with I V H.

Seventh; He looked forward, and sealed the East with H I V.

Eighth; He looked backward, and sealed the West with H V I.

Ninth; He looked to the right, and sealed the South with V I H.

Tenth; He looked to the left, and sealed the North with V H I.

12. Behold! From the Ten ineffable Sephiroth do, proceed—the One Spirit of the Gods of the living, Air, Water, Fire; and also Height, Depth, East, West, South and North. (29)

CHAPTER II

Section 1. The twenty-two sounds and letters are the Foundation of all things. Three mothers, seven doubles and twelve simples. The Three Mothers are Aleph, Mem and Shin, they are Air, Water and Fire Water is silent, Fire is sibilant, and Air derived from the Spirit is as the tongue of a balance standing between these contraries which are in equilibrium, reconciling and mediating between them.

2. He hath formed, weighed, and composed with these twenty-two letters every created thing, and the form of everything which shall hereafter be.

3. These twenty-two sounds or letters are formed by the voice, impressed on the air, and audibly modified in five places; in the throat, in the mouth, by the tongue, through the teeth, and by the lips. (31)

4. These twenty-two letters, which are the foundation of all things, He arranged as upon a sphere with two hundred and thirty-one gates, and the sphere may be rotated forward or backward, whether for good or for evil; from the good comes true pleasure, from evil nought but torment.

5. For He shewed the combination of these letters, each with the other; Aleph with all, and all with Aleph; Beth with all, and all with Beth. Thus in combining all together in pairs are produced the two hundred and thirty-one gates of knowledge. (32)

6. And from the non-existent (33) He made Something; and all forms of speech and everything that has been produced; from the empty void He made the material world, and from the inert earth He brought forth everything that hath life. He hewed, as it were, vast columns out of the intangible air, and by the power of His Name made every creature and everything that is; and the production of all things from the twenty-two letters is the proof that they are all but parts of one living body. (34)

CHAPTER III

Section 1. The Foundation of all the other sounds and letters is provided by the Three Mothers, Aleph, Mem and Shin; they resemble a Balance, on the one hand the guilty, on the other hand the purified, and Aleph the Air is like the Tongue of a Balance standing between them. (35)

2. The Three Mothers, Aleph, Mem and Shin, are a great Mystery, very admirable and most recondite, and sealed as with six rings; and from them proceed Air, Fire, and Water, which divide into active and passive forces. The Three Mothers, Aleph, Mem and Shin, are the Foundation, from them spring three Fathers, and from these have proceeded all things that are in the world.

3. The Three Mothers in the world are Aleph, Mem and Shin: the heavens (36) were produced (37) from Fire; the earth from the Water; and the Air from the Spirit is as a reconciler between the Fire and the Water.

4. The Three Mothers, Aleph, Mem and Shin, Fire, Water and Air, are shown in the Year: from the fire came heat, from the waters came cold, and from the air was produced the temperate state, again a mediator between them. The Three Mothers, Aleph, Mem and Shin, Fire, Water and Air, are found in Man: from the fire was formed the head; from the water the belly; and from the air was formed the chest, again placed as a mediator between the others.

5. These Three Mothers did He produce and design, and combined them; and He sealed them as the three mothers in the Universe, in the Year and in Man—both male and female. He caused the letter Aleph to reign in Air and crowned it, and combining it with the others He sealed it, as Air in the World, as the temperate (climate) of the Year, and as the breath in the chest (the lungs for breathing air) in Man: the male with Aleph, Mem, Shin, the female with Shin, Mem, Aleph. He caused the letter Mem to reign in Water, crowned it, and combining it with the others formed the earth in the world, cold in the year, and the belly in man, male and female, the former with Mem, Aleph, Shin, the latter with Mem, Shin, Aleph. He caused Shin to reign in Fire, and crowned it, and combining it with the others sealed with it the heavens in the universe, heat in the year and the head in man, male and female. (38)

CHAPTER IV

Section 1. The Seven double letters, Beth, Gimel, Daleth, Kaph, Peh, Resh, and Tau have each two sounds associated with them. They are referred to Life, Peace, Wisdom, Riches, Grace, Fertility and Power. The two sounds of each letter are the hard and the soft—the aspirated and the softened. They are called Double, because each letter presents a contrast or permutation; thus Life and Death; Peace and War; Wisdom and Folly; Riches and Poverty; Grace and Indignation; Fertility and Solitude; Power and Servitude. 2. These Seven Double Letters point out seven localities; Above, Below, East, West, North, South, and the Palace of Holiness in the midst of them sustaining all things.

3. These Seven Double Letters He designed, produced, and combined, and formed with them the Planets of this World, the Days of the Week, and the Gates of the soul (the orifices of perception) in Man. From these Seven He bath produced the Seven Heavens, the Seven Earths, the Seven Sabbaths: for this cause He has loved and blessed the number Seven more than all things under Heaven (His Throne).

4. Two Letters produce two houses; three form six; four form twenty-four; five form one hundred and twenty; six form seven hundred and twenty; (39) seven form five thousand and forty; and beyond this their numbers increase so that the mouth can hardly utter them, nor the ear hear the number of them. So now, behold the Stars of our World, the Planets which are Seven; the Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon, Saturn, Jupiter and Mars. The Seven are also the Seven Days of Creation; and the Seven Gateways of the Soul of Man—the two eyes, the two ears, the mouth and the two nostrils. So with the Seven are formed the seven heavens, (41) the seven earths, and the seven periods of time; and so has He preferred the number Seven above all things under His Heaven. (42)
Supplement to Chapter IV

NOTE.—This is one of several modern illustrations of the allotment of the Seven Letters; it is not found in the ancient copies of the “Sepher Yetzirah.” He produced Beth, and referred it to Wisdom ; He crowned it, combined and formed with it the Moon in the Universe, the first day of the week, and the right eye of man.

He produced Gimel, and referred it to Health; He crowned it, combined and joined with it Mars in the Universe, the second day of the week, and the right ear of man.

He produced Daleth, and referred it to Fertility; He crowned it, combined and formed with it the Sun in the Universe, the third day of the week, and the right nostril of man.

He produced Kaph, and referred it to Life; He crowned it, combined and formed with it Venus in the Universe, the fourth day of the week, and the left eye of man.

He produced Peh, and referred it to Power; He crowned it, combined and formed with it Mercury in the Universe, the fifth day of the week, and the left ear of man.

He produced Resh, and referred it to Peace; He crowned it, combined and formed with it Saturn in the Universe, the sixth day of the week, and the left nostril of man.

He produced Tau, and referred it to Beauty; He crowned it, combined and formed with it Jupiter in the Universe, the Seventh Day of the week, and the mouth of man.

By these Seven letters were also made seven worlds, seven heavens, seven earths, seven seas, seven rivers, seven deserts, seven days, seven weeks from Passover to Pentecost, and every seventh year a Jubilee.

Mayer Lambert gives:—Beth to Saturn and the Hebrew Sabbath—that is Saturday; Gimel to Jupiter and Sunday; Daleth to Mars and Monday; Kaph to the Sun and Tuesday; Peh to Venus and Wednesday; Resh to Mercury and Thursday; and Tau to the Moon and

Friday.
CHAPTER V

1. The Twelve Simple Letters are Héh, Vau, Zain, Cheth, Teth, Yod, Lamed, Nun, Samech, Oin, Tzaddi and Qoph; (43) they are the foundations of these twelve properties: Sight, Hearing, Smell, Speech, Taste, Sexual Love, Work, Movement, Anger, Mirth, Imagination, (44) and Sleep. These Twelve are also allotted to the directions in space: North-east, South-east, the East above, the East below, the North above, the North below, the South-west, the Northwest, the West above, the West below, the South above, and the South below; these diverge to infinity, and are as the arms of the Universe.

2. These Twelve Simple Letters He designed, and combined, and formed with them the Twelve celestial constellations of the Zodiac, whose signs are Teth, Shin, Tau, Samech, Aleph, Beth, Mem, Oin, Qoph, Gimel, Daleth, and Daleth. (45) The Twelve are also the Months of the Year: Nisan, (46) Yiar, Sivan, Tamuz, Ab, Elul, Tishri, Hesvan, Kislev, Tebet, Sabat and Adar. The Twelve are also the Twelve organs of living creatures: (47) the two hands, the two feet, the two kidneys, the spleen, the liver, the gall, private parts, stomach and intestines.

He made these, as it were provinces, and arranged them as in order of battle for warfare. And also the Elohim (48) made one from the region of the other.

Three Mothers and Three Fathers; and thence issue Fire, Air and Water. Three Mothers, Seven Doubles and Twelve Simple letters and sounds.

3. Behold now these are the Twenty and Two Letters from which Jah, Jehovah Tzabaoth, the Living Elohim, the God of Israel, exalted and sublime, the Dweller in eternity, formed and established all things; High and Holy is His Name.

Supplement to Chapter V

NOTE.—This is a modern illustration of the allotment of the Twelve Letters; it is not found in the ancient copies of the “Sepher Yetzirah.”

1. God produced Hé predominant in Speech, crowned it, combined and formed with it Aries in the Universe, Nisan in the Year, and the right foot of Man.

2. He produced Vau, predominant in mind, crowned it, combined and formed with it Taurus in the Universe, Aiar in the Year, and the right kidney of Man.

3. He produced Zain, predominant in Movement crowned it, combined and formed it with Gemini in the Universe, Sivan in the Year, and the left foot of Man.

4. He produced Cheth, predominant in Sight, crowned it, combined and formed it with Cancer in the Universe, Tammuz in the year, and the right hand of Man.

5. He produced Teth, predominant in Hearing, crowned it, combined and formed with it

Leo in the Universe, Ab in the Year, and the left kidney in Man.

6. He produced Yod, predominant in Work, crowned it, combined and formed with it Virgo in the Universe, Elul in the Year, and the left hand of Man.

7. He produced Lamed, predominant in Sexual desire, crowned it, combined and formed with it Libra in the Universe, Tishri in the Year, and the private parts of Man. (Kalisch gives "gall.")

8. He produced Nun, predominant in Smell, crowned it, combined and formed with it Scorpio in the Universe, Heshvan in the Year, and the intestines of Man.

9. He produced Samech, predominant in Sleep, crowned it, combined and formed with it Sagittarius in the Universe, Kislev in the Year, and the stomach of Man.

10. He produced Oin, predominant in Anger, crowned it, combined and formed with it Capricornus in the Universe, Tebet in the Year, and the liver of Man.

11. He produced Tzaddi, predominant in Taste, crowned it, combined and formed with it Aquarius in the Year, and the gullet in Man).

12. He produced Qoph, predominant in Mirth, crowned it, combined and formed with it Pisces in the Universe, Adar in the Year, and the spleen of Man.

NOTE.—Mediaeval authorities and modern editors give very different allocations to the twelve simple letters.

CHAPTER VI

Section 1. Three Fathers and their generations, Seven conquerors and their armies, and Twelve bounds of the Universe. See now, of these words, the faithful witnesses are the Universe, the Year and Man. The dodecad, the heptad, and the triad with their provinces; above is the Celestial Dragon, T L I, (49) and below is the World, and lastly the heart of Man. The Three are Water, Air and Fire; Fire above, Water below, and Air conciliating between them; and the sign of these things is that the Fire sustains (volatilises) the waters; Mem is mute, Shin is sibilant, and Aleph is the Mediator and as it were a friend placed between them.

2. The Celestial Dragon, T L I, is placed over the universe like a king upon the throne; the revolution of the year is as a king over his dominion; the heart of man is as a king in warfare. Moreover, He made all things one from the other; and the Elohim set good over against evil, and made good things from good, and evil things from evil: with the good tested He the evil, and with the evil did He try the good. Happiness (50) is reserved for the good, and misery (51) is kept for the wicked.

3. The Three are One, and that One stands above. The Seven are divided; three are over against three, and one stands between the triads. The Twelve stand as in warfare; three are friends, three are enemies; three are life givers; three are destroyers. The

three friends are the heart, the ears, and the mouth; the three enemies are the liver, the gall, and the tongue; (52) while God (53) the faithful king rules over all. One above Three, Three above Seven, and Seven above Twelve: and all are connected the one with the other.

4. And after that our father Abraham had perceived and understood, and had taken down and engraved all these things, the Lord most high (55) revealed Himself, and called him His beloved, and made a Covenant with him and his seed; and Abraham believed on Him (56) and it was imputed unto him for righteousness. And He made this Covenant as between the ten toes of the feet—this is that of circumcision; and as between the ten fingers of the hands and this is that of the tongue. (57) And He formed the twenty-two letters into speech (58) and shewed him all the mysteries of them. (59) He drew them through the Waters; He burned them in the Fire; He vibrated them in the Air; Seven planets in the heavens, and Twelve celestial constellations of the stars of the Zodiac.

— The End of “The Book of Formation” —

THE FIFTY GATES OF INTELLIGENCE

Attached to some editions of the “Sepher Yetzirah” is found this scheme of Kabalistic classification of knowledge emanating from the Second Sephira Binah, Understanding, and descending by stages through the angels, heavens, humanity, animal and vegetable and mineral kingdoms to Hyle and the chaos. The Kabalists said that one must enter and pass up through the Gates to attain to the Thirty-two Paths of Wisdom; and that even Moses only passed through the forty-ninth Gate, and never entered the fiftieth. See the Oedipus Aegyptiacus of Athanasius Kircher, vol. ii. p. 319.

First Order: Elementary

1. Chaos, Hyle, The first matter.
2. Formless, void, lifeless.
3. The Abyss.
4. Origin of the Elements.
5. Earth (no seed germs).
6. Water.
7. Air.
8. Fire
9. Differentiation of qualities.

10. Mixture and combination.
Second Order: Decad of Evolution

- 11. Minerals differentiate.
- 12. Vegetable principles appear.
- 13. Seeds germinate in moisture.
- 14. Herbs and Trees.
- 15. Fructification in vegetable life.
- 16. Origin of low forms of animal life.
- 17. Insects and Reptiles appear.
- 18. Fishes, vertebrate life in the waters.
- 19. Birds, vertebrate life in the air.
- 20. Quadrupeds, vertebrate earth animals.

Third Order: Decad of Humanity

- 21. Appearance of Man.
- 22. Material human body.
- 23. Human Soul conferred.
- 24. Mystery of Adam and Eve.
- 25. Complete Man as the Microcosm.
- 26. Gift of five human faces acting exteriorly.
- 27. Gift of five powers to the soul.
- 28. Adam Kadmon, the Heavenly Man.
- 29. Angelic beings.
- 30. Man in the image of God.

Fourth Order: World of Spheres

- 31. The Moon.

32. Mercury.

33. Venus.

34. Sol.

35. Mars.

36. Jupiter.

37. Saturn.

38. The Firmament.

39. The Primum Mobile.

40. The Empyrean Heaven.
Fifth Order: The Angelic World

41. Ishim—Sons of Fire.

42. Auphanim—Cherubim.

43. Aralim—Thrones.

44. Chashmalim—Dominions.

45. Seraphim—Virtues.

46. Malakim—Powers.

47. Elohim—Principalities.

48. Beni Elohim—Angels.

49. Cherubim—Arch-angels.
Sixth Order: The Archetype

50. God. Ain Suph. He Whom no mortal eye hath seen, and Who has been known to Jesus the Messiah alone.

NOTE.—The Angels of the Fifth or Angelic World are arranged in very different order by various Kabalistic Rabbis.

THE THIRTY-TWO PATHS OF WISDOM

Translated from the Hebrew Text of Joannes Stephanus Rittangelius, 1642: which is also to be found in the “Oedipus Aegyptiacus” of Athanasius Kircher, 1653.

(These paragraphs are very obscure in meaning, and the Hebrew text is probably very corrupt.)

The First Path is called the Admirable or the Hidden Intelligence (the Highest Crown): for it is the Light giving the power of comprehension of that First Principle which has no beginning; and it is the Primal Glory, for no created being can attain to its essence.

The Second Path is that of the Illuminating Intelligence: it is the Crown of Creation, the Splendour of the Unity, equalling it, and it is exalted above every head, and named by the Kabalists the Second Glory.

The Third Path is the Sanctifying Intelligence, and is the foundation of Primordial wisdom, which is called the Creator of Faith, and its roots are AMN; and it is the parent of Faith, from which doth Faith emanate.

The Fourth Path is named the Cohesive or Receptacular Intelligence; and is so called because it contains all the holy powers, and from it emanate all the spiritual virtues with the most exalted essences: they emanate one from the other by the power of the Primordial Emanation. The Highest Crown.) (1)

The Fifth Path is called the Radical Intelligence, because it resembles the Unity, uniting itself to the Binah, (2) or Intelligence which emanates from the Primordial depths of Wisdom or Chokmah. (3)

The Sixth Path is called the Mediating Intelligence, because in it are multiplied the influxes of the emanations, for it causes that influence to flow into all the reservoirs of the Blessings, with which these themselves are united.

The Seventh Path is the Occult Intelligence, because it is the Refulgent Splendour of all the Intellectual virtues which are perceived by the eyes of intellect, and by the contemplation of faith.

The Eighth Path is called the Absolute or Perfect Intelligence, because it is the means of the primordial, which has no root by which it can cleave, nor rest, except in the hidden places of Gedulah, (4) Magnificence, from which emanates its own proper essence.

The Ninth Path is the Pure Intelligence, so called because it purifies the Numerations, it proves and corrects the designing of their representation, and disposes their unity with which they are combined without diminution or division.

The Tenth Path is the Resplendent Intelligence, because it is exalted above every head, and sits on the throne of Binah (the Intelligence spoken of in the Third Path). It illuminates the splendour of all the lights, and causes an influence to emanate from the Prince of countenances. (5)

The Eleventh Path is the Scintillating Intelligence, because it is the essence of that curtain which is placed close to the order of the disposition, and this is a special dignity given to it that it may be able to stand before the Face of the Cause of Causes.

The Twelfth Path is the Intelligence of Transparency, because it is that species of Magnificence called Chazchazit, (6) the place whence issues the vision of those seeing in apparitions. (That is the prophecies by seers in a vision.)

The Thirteenth Path is named the Uniting Intelligence, and is so called because it is itself the Essence of Glory. It is the Consummation of the Truth of individual spiritual things.

The Fourteenth Path is the Illuminating Intelligence and is so called because it is that Chashmal (7) which is the founder of the concealed and fundamental ideas of holiness and of their stages of preparation.

The Fifteenth Path is the Constituting Intelligence, so called because it constitutes the substance of creation in pure darkness, and men have spoken of these contemplations; it is that darkness spoken of in Scripture, Job xxxviii. 9, "and thick darkness a swaddling band for it."

The Sixteenth Path is the Triumphal or Eternal Intelligence, so called because it is the pleasure of the Glory, beyond which is no other Glory like to it, and it is called also the Paradise prepared for the Righteous.

The Seventeenth Path is the Disposing Intelligence, which provides Faith to the Righteous, and they are clothed with the Holy Spirit by it, and it is called the Foundation of Excellence in the state of higher things.

The Eighteenth Path is called the Intelligence or House of Influence (by the greatness of whose abundance the influx of good things upon created beings is increased), and from its midst the arcana and hidden senses are drawn forth, which dwell in its shade and which cling to it, from the Cause of all causes.

The Nineteenth Path is the Intelligence of the Secret of all the activities of the spiritual beings, and is so called because of the influence diffused by it from the most high and exalted sublime glory.

The Twentieth Path is the Intelligence of Will, and is so called because it is the means of preparation of all and each created being, and by this intelligence the existence of the Primordial Wisdom becomes known.

The Twenty-first Path is the Intelligence of Conciliation and Reward, and is so called because it receives the divine influence which flows into it from its benediction upon all and each existence.

The Twenty-second Path is the Faithful Intelligence, and is so called because by it

spiritual virtues are increased, and all dwellers on earth are nearly under its shadow.

The Twenty-third Path is the Stable Intelligence, and it is so called because it has the virtue of consistency among all numerations.

The Twenty-fourth Path is the Imaginative Intelligence, and it is so called because it gives a likeness to all the similitudes which are created in like manner similar to its harmonious elegancies.

The Twenty-fifth Path is the Intelligence of Probation, or Temptation, and is so called because it is the primary temptation, by which the Creator trieth all righteous persons.

The Twenty-sixth Path is called the Renewing Intelligence, because the Holy God renews by it all the changing things which are renewed by the creation of the world.

The Twenty-seventh Path is the Active or Exciting Intelligence, and it is so called because through it every existent being receives its spirit and motion.

The Twenty-eighth Path is called the Natural Intelligence; by it is completed and perfected the nature of all that exists beneath the Sun.

(This Path is omitted by Rittangelius: I presume by inadvertence.)

The Twenty-ninth Path is the Corporeal Intelligence, so called because it forms every body which is formed in all the worlds, and the reproduction of them.

The Thirtieth Path is the Collective Intelligence, and Astrologers deduce from it the judgment of the Stars and celestial signs, and perfect their science, according to the rules of the motions of the stars.

The Thirty-first Path is the Perpetual Intelligence; but why is it so called? Because it regulates the motions of the Sun and Moon in their proper order, each in an orbit convenient for it.

The Thirty-second Path is the Administrative Intelligence, and it is so called because it directs and associates the motions of the seven planets, directing all of them in their own proper courses.

NOTES TO THE SEPHER YETZIRAH

It is of considerable importance to a clear understanding of this Occult treatise that the whole work be read through before comment is made, so that the general idea of the several chapters may become in the mind one concrete whole. A separate consideration of the several parts should follow this general grasp of the subject, else much confusion may result.

This hook may be considered to be an Allegorical Parallel between the Idealism of Numbers and Letters and the various parts of the Universe, and it sheds much light on

many mystic forms and ceremonies yet extant, notably upon Freemasonry, the Tarot, and the later Kabbalah, and is a great aid to the comprehension of the Astro-Theosophic schemes of the Rosicrucians. To obtain the full value of this Treatise, it should be studied hand in hand with Hermetic attributions, the "Isiac Tablet," and with a complete set of the designs, symbols and allocation of the Trump cards of the Tarot pack, for which see my translation of The Sanctum Regnum of the Tarot, by Eliphas Levi.

Note that the oldest MSS. copies of the "Sepher Yetzirah" have no vowel points: the latest editions have them. The system of points in writing Hebrew was not perfected until the seventh century, and even then was not in constant use. Ginsburg asserts that the system of vowel pointing was invented by a Rabbi Mocha in Palestine about A.D. 570, who designed it to assist his pupils. But Isaac Myer states that there are undoubted traces of pointing in Hebrew MSS. of the second century. According to A. E. Waite there is no extant Hebrew MSS. with the vowel points older than the tenth century.

The words "Sepher Yetzirah" are written in Hebrew from right to left, SPR YTzYRH, Samech Peh Resh, Yod Tzaddi Yod Resh Heh; modes of transliteration vary with different authors. Yod is variously written in English letters as I, Y, or J, or sometimes le. Tzaddi is properly Tz; but some write Z only, which is misleading because the Hebrew has also a true Z, Zain.

CHAPTER 1

The twelve sections of this chapter introduce this philosophic disquisition upon the Formation and Development of the Universe. Having specified the subdivision of the letters into three classes, the Triad, the Heptad, and the Dodecad, these are put aside for the time; and the Decad mainly considered as specially associated with the idea of Number, and as obviously composed of the Tetrad and the Hexad.

1. Thirty-two. This is the number of the Paths or Ways of Wisdom, which are added as a supplement. 32 is written in Hebrew by LB, Lamed and Beth, and these are the last and first letters of the Pentateuch. The number 32 is obtained thus— $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 32$. Laib, LB as a Hebrew word, means the Heart of Man.

Paths. The word here is NTIBUT, netibuth; NTIB meant primarily a pathway, or foot-made track; but is here used symbolically in the same sense as the Christian uses the word, way—the way of life: other meanings are—stage, power, form, effect; and later, a doctrinal formula, in Kabbalistic writings.

2. Jah. This divine name is found in Psalm lxxviii. 4; it is translated into Greek as kurios, and into Latin as dominus, and commonly into the English word, Lord: it is really the first half of the word IHVH or Jehovah, or the Yahveh of modern scholars.

3. Jehovah Tzabaoth. This divine name is printed in English Bibles as Jehovah Sabaoth, or as "Lord of hosts" as in Psalm xxiv. 10. TzBA is an army.

4. God of Israel. Here the word God is ALHI, which in unpointed Hebrew might be God, or Gods, or My God.

5. The Elohim of the Living. The words are ALHIM CHIIM. Alhim, often written in English letters as Elohim, or by Godfrey Higgins as Aleim, seems to be a masculine plural of the feminine form Eloah, ALH, of the divine masculine name EL, AL; this is commonly translated God, and means strong, mighty, supreme. Chiim is the plural of Chi—living, or life. ChIH is a living animal, and so is ChIVA. ChII is also life. Frey in his dictionary gives CHIIM as the plural word lives, or vitae. The true adjective for living is ChIA. Elohim Chiim, then, apart from Jewish or Christian preconception, is “the living Gods,” or “the Gods of the lives, i.e., living ones.” Rittangelius gives Dii viventes, “The living Gods,” both words in the plural. Pistorius omits both words. Postellus, the orthodox, gives Deus Vivus. The Elohim are the Seven Forces, proceeding from the One Divine, which control the “terra viventium,” the manifested world of life.

6. God. In this case we have the simple form AL, EL.

7. Sepharim. SPRIM, the plural masculine of SPR, commonly translated book or letter: the meaning here is plainly “forms of expression.”

8. Numbers, Letters and Sounds. The three Hebrew words here given are, in unpointed Hebrew, SPR, SPR and SIPUR. Some late editors, to cover the difficulty of this passage, have given SPR, SPUR, SIPR, pointing them to read Separ, Seepur, Saypar.

The sense of the whole volume appears to need their translation as Numbers, Letters and Sounds. Pistorius gave “Scriptis, numeratis, pronunciatis.” Postellus gave “Numerans, numerus, numeratus,” thus losing the contrasted meanings; and so did Rittangelius, who gave “Numero, numerante, numerato.”

9. The Ineffable Sephiroth. The words are SPIRUT BLIMH, Sephiruth Belimah. The simplest translation is “the voices from nothing.” The Ten Sephiruth of the Kabbalah are the “Ten Primary Emanations from the Divine Source,” which are the primal forces leading to all manifestation upon every plane in succession. Buxtorf gives for Sephiruth—predicationes logicae. The word seems to me clearly allied to the Latin spiritus—spirit, soul, wind; and is used by Quintilian as a sound, or noise. The meaning of Belimah is more doubtful. Rittangelius always gives “praeter illud ineffabile.” Pistorius gives “praeter ineffabile.” Postellus evades the difficulty and simply puts the word Belimah into his Latin translation. In Frey's Hebrew Dictionary BLIMH is translated as nothing, without any other suggestion; BLI is “not,” MR is “anything.” In Kabbalistic writings the Sephiruth, the Divine Voices and Powers, are called “ineffabilis,” not to be spoken of, from their sacred nature.

10. The classification of the Hebrew letters into a Triad, Heptad and Dodecad, runs through the whole philosophy of the Kabbalah. Many ancient authors added intentional blinds, such as forming the Triad of A.M.T., Ameth, truth; and of AMN, Amen.

11. The Two Covenants, by the Word or Spirit, and by the Flesh, made by Jehovah with Abraham, Genesis xvii. The Covenant of Circumcision was to be an outward and visible sign of the Divine promise made to Abraham and his offspring. The Hebrew word for

circumcision is Mulah, MULH: note that MLH is also synonymous with DBR, dabar,—verbum or word.

12. Rittangelius gives “replace the formative power upon his throne.” Postellus gives restore the device to its place.”

13. Abyss; the word is OUMQ for OMQ, a depth, vastness, or valley.

14. My Hermetic rituals explained this Yetziratic attribution.

15. The Lord the only God. The words are ADUN IChID AL, or “Adonai (as commonly written) the only El.”

16. Seat. The word is MOUN, dwelling, habitation, or throne.

17. Lightning flash. In the early edition the words “like scintillating flame” are used: the Hebrew word is BRQ. Many Kabbalists have shown how the Ten Sephiroth are symbolised by the zig-zag lightning flash.

18. God; the Divine name here is Jehovah.

19. The text gives only RTzUAV ShUB—“currendo et redeundo,” but the commentators have generally considered this to be a quotation from Ezekiel i. 14, referred to H ChIVT, the living creatures, kerubic forms.

20. The Spirit of the Gods of the Living. RUC h ALHIM ChIIIM; or as R. gives it, “spiritus Deorum Viventium.” Orthodoxy would translate these words “The spirit of the living God.”

21. AL ChI H OULMIM; “the Living God of Ages”; here the word God really is in the singular.

22. The Voice, Spirit and Word are QUL, RUC h, DBR. A very notable Hebrew expression of Divinatory intuition was BATH QUL, the Daughter of the Voice.

23. Formless and Void. THU and BHU; these two words occur in Genesis i. 2, and are translated “waste and void.”

24. Note the order in which the primordial elements were produced. First, Spirit (query Akasa, Ether); then Air, Vayu; then Water, Apas, which condenses into solid elementary Earth, Prithivi; and lastly from the Water He formed Fire.

25. The first name is often written Ophanim, the letters are AUPNIM; in the Vision of Ezekiel i. 16, the word occurs and is translated “Wheels.” ShRPIM are the mysterious beings of Isaiah vi. 2; the word otherwise is translated Serpent, and in Numbers xxi. 6, as “fiery serpents”: also in verse 8 as “fiery serpent” when Jehovah said “Make thee a fiery serpent and set it upon a pole.” Kerubim. The Hebrew words are ChIVTh H QDSh,

holy animals: I have ventured to put Kerubim, as the title of the other Biblical form of Holy mysterious animal, as given in 1 Kings vi. 23 and Exodus xxv. 18, and indeed Genesis iii. 24. Bible dictionaries generally give the word as Cherubim, but in Hebrew the initial letter is always K and not Ch.

26. Three. In the first edition I overlooked this word three; and putting and for as, made four classes of serving beings.

27. This is verse 4 of Psalm civ.

28. Here follow the permutations of the name IHV, which is the Tetragrammaton—Jehovah, without the second or final Heh: IHV is a Tri-grammaton, and is more suitable to the third or Yetziratic plane. HVI is the imperative form of the verb to be, meaning be thou; HIV is the infinitive; and VIH is future. In IHV note that Yod corresponds to the Father; Heh to Binah, the Supernal Mother; and Vau to the Microprosopus—Son.

29. Note the subdivision of the Decad into the Tetrad—four elements; and the Hexad—six dimensions of space.

CHAPTER 2

This chapter consists of philosophic remarks on the twenty-two sounds and letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and hence connected with the air by speech, and it points out the uses of those letters to form words—the signs of ideas, and the symbols of material substances.

30. Soul; the word is NPSH, which is commonly translated soul, meaning the living personality of man, animal or existing thing: it corresponds almost to the Theosophic Prana plus the stimulus of Kama.

31. This is the modern classification of the letters into guttural, palatal, lingual, dental and labial sounds.

32. The 231 Gates. The number 242 is obtained by adding together all the numbers from 1 to 22. The Hebrew letters can be placed in pairs in 242 different positions: thus ab, ag, ad, up to at; then ba, bb, bg, bd, up to bt, and so on to ts, tt: this is in direct order only, without reversal. For the reason why eleven are deducted, and the number 231 specified, see the Table and Note 15 in the edition of Postellus.

33. Non-existent; the word is AIN, nothingness. Ain precedes Ain Suph, boundlessness; and Ain Suph Aur, Boundless Light.

34. Body; the word is GUP, usually applied to the animal material body, but here means “one whole.”

CHAPTER 3

This chapter is especially concerned with the essence of the Triad, as represented by

the Three Mothers, Aleph, Mem, and Shin. Their development in three directions is pointed out, namely in the Macrocosm or Universe; in the Year or in Time; and in the Microcosm or Man.

35. The importance of equilibrium is constantly reiterated in the Kabbalah. The “Siphra Dtzeniouta,” or “Book of Mystery,” opens with a reference to this Equilibrium as a fundamental necessity of stable existence.

36. Heavens. The Hebrew word Heshamaim HShMIM, has in it the element of Aesh, fire, and Mim, water; and also Shem, name; The Name is IHVH, attributed to the elements. ShMA is in Chaldee a name for the Trinity (Parkhurst). ShMSh is the Sun, and Light, and a type of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. Malachi iv. 2.

37. Were produced. The Hebrew word BRA, is the root. Three Hebrew words are used in the Bible to represent the idea of making, producing or creating.

BRIAH, BriaH, giving shape, Genesis i. 1.

OSHIH, Ashiah, completing, Genesis i. 31.

ITZIRH, Yetzirah, forming, Genesis ii. 7.

To these the Kabbalists add the word ATzLH, with the meaning of “producing something manifest from the unmanifested.”

^ Emanation ^ Shin ^ Aleph ^ Mem ^ | Macrocosm | Primal Fire | Spirit | Primal Water | |
Universe | Heavens | Atmosphere | The Earth | | Elements | Terrestrial Fire | Air | Water
| | Man | Head | Chest | Belly | | Year | Heat | Temperate | Cold |
CHAPTER 4

This is the special chapter of the Heptad, the powers and properties of the Seven. Here again we have the threefold attribution of the numbers and letters to the Universe, to the Year, and to Man. The supplemental paragraphs have been printed in modern form by Kalisch; they identify the several letters of the Heptad more definitely with the planets, days of the week, human attributes and organs of the senses.

39. These numbers have been a source of difference between the editors and copyists, hardly any two editors concurring. I have given the numbers arising from continual multiplication of the product by each succeeding unit from one to seven. $2 \times 1 = 2$, $2 \times 3 = 6$, $6 \times 4 = 24$, $24 \times 5 = 120$, $120 \times 6 = 720$, $720 \times 7 = 5040$.

40. In associating the particular letters to each planet the learned Jesuit Athanasius Kircher allots Beth to the Sun, Gimel to Venus, Daleth to Mercury, Kaph to Luna, Peh to Saturn, Resh to Jupiter, and Tau to Mars. Kalisch in the supplementary paragraphs gives a different attribution; both are wrong, according to clairvoyant investigation. Consult the Tarot symbolism given by Court de Gebelin, Eliphas Levi, and my notes to the Isiaic Tablet of Bembo. The true attribution is probably not anywhere printed. The

planet names here given are Chaldee words.

41. The Seven Heavens and the Seven Earths are printed with errors, and I believe intentional mistakes, in many occult ancient books. Some Hermetic MSS. have the correct names and spelling.

42. On the further attribution of these Seven letters, note that Postellus gives: Vita—mors, Pax—afflictio, Sapientia—stultitia, Divitiae (Opus)—paupertas, Gratia—opprobrium, Proles—sterilitas, Imperium—servitus. Pistorius gives: Vita—mors, Pax—bellum, Scientia—ignorantia, Divitiae—paupertas, Gratia—abominatio, Semen (Proles)—sterilitas, Imperium (Dominatio)—servitus.

CHAPTER 5

This chapter is specially concerned with the Dodecad; the number twelve is itself pointed out, and the characters of its component units, once more in the three zones of the universe, year and man; the last paragraph gives a recapitulation of the whole number of letters: the Supplement gives a form of allotment of the several letters.

43. It is necessary to avoid confusion between these letters; different authors translate them in different manners. Heh or Hé not be confused with Cheth, or Heth, Ch. Teth, Th also must be kept distinct from the final letter Tau, T, which is one of the double letters; the semi-English pronunciation of these two letters is much confused, each is at times both t and th; Yod is either I, Y, or J; Samech is simple S, and must not be confused with Shin, Sh, one of the mother letters; Oin is often written in English Hebrew grammars as Ayin, and Sometimes as Gnain; Tzaddi must not be confused with Zain, Z; and lastly Qoph, Q, is very often replaced by K, which is hardly defensible as there is a true K in addition.

44. Postellus gives suspicion and Pistorius, mind.

45. These letters are the initials of the 12 Zodiacal signs in Hebrew nomenclature. They are:

| Teth | Telah | Aries | Mem | Maznim | Libra | | Shin | Shor | Taurus | Oin | Oqereb |
Scorpio | | Tau | Thaumim | Gemini | Qoph | Qesheth | Sagittarius | | Samech | Sartan |
Cancer | Gimel | Gedi | Capricorn | | Aleph | Aryeh | Leo | Daleth | Dali | Aquarius | | Beth
| Bethuleh | Virgo | Daleth | Dagim | Pisces |

46. The month Nisan begins about March 29th. Yiar is also written Iyar, and Aiar: the Hebrew letters are AIIR.

47. The list of organs varies. All agree in two hands, two feet, two kidneys, liver, gall and spleen. Postellus then gives, intestina, vesica, arteriae, the intestines, bladder, and arteries; Rittangelius gives the same. Pistorius gives, “colon, coagulum (spleen) et ventriculus,” colon—the large intestine, coagulum and stomach. The chief difficulty is with the Hebrew word MSS, which is allied to two different roots, one meaning private, concealed, hidden; and the other meaning liquefied.

48. The Elohim—Divine powers—not IHVH the Tetragrammaton.

CHAPTER 6

This chapter is a resumé of the preceding five; it calls the universe and mankind to witness to the truth of the scheme of distribution of the powers of the numbers among created forms, and concludes with the narration that this philosophy was revealed by the Divine to Abraham, who received and faithfully accepted it, as a form of Wisdom under a Covenant.

49. The Dragon, TLI, Theli. The Hebrew letters amount in numeration to 440, that is 400, 30 and 10. The best opinion is that Tali or Theli refers to the 12 Zodiacal constellations along the great circle of the Ecliptic; where it ends there it begins again, and so the ancient occultists drew the Dragon with its tail in its mouth. Some have thought that Tali referred to the constellation Draco, which meanders across the Northern polar sky; others have referred it to the Milky Way; others to an imaginary line joining Caput to Cauda Draconis, the upper and lower nodes of the Moon. Adolphe Franck says that Theli is an Arabic word.

50. Happiness, or a good end, or simply good, TUBH.

51. Misery, or an evil end, or simply evil, ROH.

52. This Hebrew version omits the allotment of the remaining six. Mayer gives the paragraph thus:—The triad of amity is the heart and the two ears; the triad of enmity is the liver, gall, and the tongue; the three life-givers are the two nostrils and the spleen; the three death-dealing ones are the mouth and the two lower openings of the body.

53. God. In this case the name is AL, EL.

54. This last paragraph is generally considered to be less ancient than the remainder of the treatise, and by another author.

55. The Lord most high. OLIU ADUN. Adun or Adon, or Adonai, ADNI, are commonly translated Lord; Eliun, OLIUN, is the more usual form of “the most high one.”

56. Him. Rittangelius gives “credidit in Tetragrammaton,” but this word is not in the Hebrew.

57. Tongue. The verbal covenant.

58. Speech. The Hebrew has “upon his tongue.”

59. The Hebrew version of Rabbi Judah Ha Levi concludes with the phrase, “and said of him, Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee.” Rabbi Luria gives the Hebrew version which I have translated. Postellus gives: “He drew him into the water, He rose up in spirit, He inflamed him in seven suitable forms with twelve signs.” Mayer gives: “Er

zog sie mit Wasser, zundet sie an mit Feuer; erregte sie mit Geist; verbannte sie mit sieben, goss sie aus mit den zwölf Gestirnen.” “He drew them with water, He kindled them with fire, He moved them with spirit, distributed them with seven, and sent them forth with twelve.

Notes to the Thirty-Two Paths of Wisdom

1. The Highest Crown is Kether, the First Sephira, the first emanation from the Ain Suph Aur, the Limit-less Light.
2. Binah, or Understanding, is the Third Sephira.
3. Chokmah, Wisdom, is the Second Sephira.
4. Gedulah is a synonym of Chesed, Mercy, the Fourth Sephira.
5. Metatron, the Intelligence of the First Sephira, and the reputed guide of Moses.
6. This word is from ChZCh, a seer, seership. Chazuth is a vision.
7. This word means “scintillating flame.”

The “Thirty-two Paths of Wisdom” refer to the Ten Sephiroth and the Twenty-two letters, each supplying a type of divine power and attributes. In my Introduction to the Kabbalah will be found a diagram showing how the Paths from Eleven to Thirty-two connect the several Sephiroth, and are deemed to transmit the divine influence. Some teachers of Occult Science also allot the Twenty-two Trumps of the Tarot Cards to the twenty-two Paths.

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The Chaldæan Oracles

Attributed To Zoroaster

Preface by Sapere Aude (William Wynn Westcott)

THESE Oracles are considered to embody many of the principal features of Chaldæan philosophy. They have come down to us through Greek translations and were held in the greatest esteem throughout antiquity, a sentiment which was shared alike by the early Christian Fathers and the later Platonists. The doctrines contained therein are attributed to Zoroaster through to which particular Zoroaster is not known; historians give notices of as many as six different individuals all bearing that name, which was probably the title of the Prince of the Magi, and a generic term. The word Zoroaster is by various authorities differently derived: Kircher furnishes one of the most interesting derivations when he seeks to show that it comes from TzURA = a figure, and TzIUR = to fashion, ASH = fire, and STR = hidden; from these he gets the words Zairaster = fashioning images of hidden fire;—or Tzuraster = the image of secret things. Others derive it from Chaldee and Greek words meaning “a contemplator of the Stars.”

It is not, of course, pretended that this collection as it stands is other than disjointed and fragmentary, and it is more than probable that the true sense of many passages has been obscured, and even in some cases hopelessly obliterated, by inadequate translation.

Where it has been possible to do so, an attempt has been made to, elucidate doubtful or ambiguous expressions, either by modifying the existing translation from the Greek, where deemed permissible, or by appending annotations.

It has been suggested by some that these Oracles are of Greek invention, but it has already been pointed out by Stanley that Picus de Mirandula assured Ficinus that he had the Chaldee Original in his possession, “in which those things which are faulty and defective in the Greek are read perfect and entire,” and Ficinus indeed states that he found this MS. upon the death of Mirandula. In addition to this, it should be noted that here and there in the original Greek version, words occur which are not of Greek extraction at all, but are Hellenised Chaldee. Berosus is said to be the first who introduced the writings of the Chaldæans concerning Astronomy and Philosophy among

the Greeks,* and it is certain that the traditions of Chaldea very largely influenced Greek thought. Taylor considers that some of these mystical utterances are the sources whence the sublime conceptions of Plato were formed, and large commentaries were written upon them by Porphyry, Iamblichus, Proclus, Pletho and Psellus. That men of such great learning and sagacity should have thought so highly of these Oracles, is a fact which in itself should commend them to our attention.

The term "Oracles" was probably bestowed upon these epigrammatic utterances in order to enforce the idea of their profound and deeply mysterious nature. The Chaldæans, however, had an Oracle, which they venerated as highly as the Greeks did that at Delphi.***

We are indebted to both Psellus and Pletho, for comments at some length upon the Chaldaen Oracles, and the collection adduced by these writers has been considerably enlarged by Franciscus Patricius, who made many additions from Proclus, Hermias, Simplicius, Damascius, Synesius, Olympiodorus, Nicephorus and Arnobius; his collection, which comprised some 324 oracles under general heads, was published in Latin in 1593, and constitutes the groundwork of the later classification arrived at by Taylor and Cory; all of these editions have been utilized in producing the present revise.

A certain portion of these Oracles collected by Psellus, appear to be correctly attributed to a Chaldæan Zoroaster of very early date, and are marked "Z," following the method indicated by Taylor, with one or two exceptions. Another portion is attributed to a sect of philosophers named Theurgists, who flourished during the reign of Marcus Antoninus, upon the authority of Proclus,*** and these are marked "T." Oracles additional to these two series and of less definite source are marked "Z or T." Other oracular passages from miscellaneous authors are indicated by their names.

The printed copies of the Oracles to be found in England are the following:—

Oracula Magica, Ludovicus Tiletanus, Paris, 1563.

Zoroaster et ejus 320 oracula Chaldaica; by Franciscus Patricius... 1593.

Fred. Morellus; Zoroastris oracula. 1597. Supplies about a hundred verses.

Otto Heurnius; Barbaricæ Philosophiæ antiquitatum libri duo 1600.

Johannes Opsopoeus; Oracula Magica Zoroastris 1599. This includes

Commentaries of Pletho and Psellus in Latin.

Servatus Gallæus; Sibylliakoi Chresmoi, 1688. Contains a version of the Oracles.

Thomas Stanley. The History of the Chaldaic Philosophy, 1701. This treatise contains the Latin of Patricius, and the Commentaries of Pletho and Psellus in English.

Johannes Alb. Fabricius, Bibliotheca Græca, 1705–7. Quotes the Oracles.

Jacobus Marthanus, 1689. This version contains the Commentary of Gemistus Pletho.

Thomas Taylor, The Chaldæan Oracles, in The Monthly Magazine, and published independently, 1806.

Biblioteca Classica Latina; A. Lemaire, volume 124, Paris 1823.

Isaac Preston Cory, Ancient Fragments, London, 1828. (A third edition of this work has been published, omitting the Oracles.)

Phoenix, New York, 1835. A collection of curious old tracts, among which are the Oracles of Zoroaster, copied from Thomas Taylor and I. P. Cory; with an essay by Edward Gibbon.

NOTES:

* Josephus, contra Apion. I.

** Stephanus, De Urbibus.

*** Vide his Scholia on the Cratylus of Plato.

Introduction

By L. O. (Levavi Oculos, Percy William Bullock)

It has been believed by many, and not without good reason, that these terse and enigmatic utterances enshrine a profound system of mystical philosophy, but that this system demands for its full discernment a refinement of faculty, involving, as it does, a discrete perception of immaterial essences.

It has been asserted that the Chaldæan magi* preserved their occult learning among their race by continual tradition from Father to Son. Diodorus says: "They learn these things, not after the same fashion as the Greeks: for amongst the Chaldæans, philosophy is delivered by tradition in the family, the Son receiving it from his Father, being exempted from all other employment; and thus having their parents for their teachers, they learn all things fully and abundantly, believing more firmly what is communicated to them."**

The remains then of this oral tradition seems to exist in these Oracles, which should be studied in the light of the Kabalah and of Egyptian Theology. Students are aware that the Kabalah*** is susceptible of extraordinary interpretation with the aid of the Tarot, resuming as the latter does, the very roots of Egyptian Theology. Had a similar course been adopted by commentators in the past, the Chaldæan system expounded in these Oracles would not have been distorted in the way it has been.

The foundation upon which the whole structure of the Hebrew Kabalah rests is an exposition of ten deific powers successively emanated by the Illimitable Light which in their varying dispositions are considered as the key of all things. This divine procession in the form of Three Triads of Powers, synthesized in a tenth, is said to be extended through four worlds, denominated respectively Atziluth, Briah, Yetzirah and Assiah, a fourfold gradation from the subtil to the gross. This proposition in its metaphysical roots is pantheistic, though, if it may be so stated, mediately theistic; while the ultimate noumenon of all phenomena is the absolute Deity, whose ideation constitutes the objective Universe.

Now these observations apply strictly also to the Chaldæan system.

The accompanying diagrams sufficiently indicate the harmony and identity of the

Chaldæan philosophy with the Hebrew Kabbalah. It will be seen that the First Mind and the Intelligible Triad, Pater, Potentia, or Mater, and Mens, are allotted to the Intelligible World of Supramundane Light: the “First Mind” represents the archetypal intelligence as an entity in the bosom of the Paternal Depth. This concentrates by reflection into the “Second Mind” representative of the Divine Power in the Empyraean World which is identified with the second great Triad of divine powers, known as the Intelligible and at the same time Intellectual Triad: the æthereal World comprises the dual third Triad denominated Intellectual: while the fourth or Elementary World is governed by Hypezokos, or Flower of Fire, the actual builder of the world.

CHALDÆAN SCHEME.

The Intelligibles The Paternal Depth
World of Supra-mundane Light The First Mind

The Intelligible Triad
Pater: Mater or Potentia: Mens

The Second Mind

Intelligibles and Intellectuals lynges
in the Synoches
Empyraean World Teletarchæ

(The Third Mind.)
Three Cosmagogi
Intellectuals (Intellectual guides inflexible.)
in the Three Amilicti
Ethereal World (Implacable thunders.)

Elementary World Hypezokos
The Demiurgos of the (Flower of Fire)
Material Universe Effable, Essential and
Elemental Orders

The Earth-Matter

KABALISTIC SCHEME.

World of Atziluth The Boundless Ain Suph.

or of God The Illimitable Ain Suph Aur
Light
A radiant triangle.

— Kether
World of Briah (crown)
Divine Forces Binah Chokmah
 (Intelligence) (Wisdom)

— Geburah Chesed
World of Yetzirah Tiphereth
or of Formation Hod Netzach
 Yesod

— Malkuth
World of Assiah Ruled by
Material Form. Adonai Melekh

— The Earth-Matter

CHALDÆAN SCHEME OF BEINGS.

Representatives of the previous classes guiding our universe.

I. Hyperarchii—Archangels

II. Azonæi—Unzoned gods

III. Zonæi—Planetary Deities.

Higher demons: Angels

Human Souls

Lower demons, elementals

Fiery

Airy

Earthy

Watery

Evil demons

Lucifugous; the kliphoth

Chaldæan Theology contemplated three great divisions of supra-mundane things:—the First was Eternal, without beginning or end, being the “Paternal Depth,” the bosom of the Deity. The Second was conceived to be that mode of being having beginning but no end; the Creative World or Empyræum falls under this head, abounding as it does in productions, but its source remaining superior to these. The third and last order of divine things had a beginning in time and will end, this is the transitory Ethereal World. Seven spheres extended through these three Worlds, viz., one in the Empyræum or verging from it, three in the Ethereal and three in the Elementary Worlds, while the whole physical realm synthesized the foregoing. These seven spheres are not to be confounded with the Seven material Planets; although the latter are the physical representatives of the former, which can only be said to be material in the metaphysical sense of the term. Psellus professed to identify them but his suggestions are inadequate as Stanley pointed out. But Stanley, although disagreeing with Psellus, is nevertheless inconsistent upon this point, for although he explains the four Worlds of the Chaldæans as successively noumenal to the physical realm, he obviously contradicts this in saying that one corporeal world is in the Empyræum.

Prior to the supramundane Light lay the “Paternal Depth,” the Absolute Deity, containing all things “in potentia” and eternally immanent. This is analogous to the Ain Suph Aur of the Kabbalah, three triads of three letters, expressing three triads of Powers, which are subsequently translated into objectivity, and constitute the great Triadic Law under the

direction of the Demiurgus, or artificer of the Universe.

In considering this schema, it must be remembered that the supramundane Light was regarded as the primal radiation from the Paternal Depth and the archetypal noumenon of the Empyræum, a universal, all-pervading—and, to human comprehension—ultimate essence. The Empyræum again, is a somewhat grosser though still highly subtilized Fire and creative source, in its turn the noumenon of the Formative or Ethereal World, as the latter is the noumenon of the Elementary World. Through these graduated media the conceptions of the Paternal Mind are ultimately fulfilled in time and space.

In some respects it is probable that the Oriental mind today is not much altered from what it was thousands of years ago, and much that now appears to us curious and phantastic in Eastern traditions, still finds responsive echo in the hearts and minds of a vast portion of mankind. A large number of thinkers and scientists in modern times have advocated tenets which, while not exactly similar, are parallel, to ancient Chaldæan conceptions; this is exemplified in the notion that the operation of natural law in the Universe is controlled or operated by conscious and discriminating power which is co-ordinate with intelligence. It is but one step further to admit that forces are entities, to people the vast spaces of the Universe with the children of phantasy. Thus history repeats itself, and the old and the new alike reflect the multiform truth.

Without entering at length into the metaphysical aspect, it is important to notice the supremacy attributed to the “Paternal Mind.” The intelligence of the Universe, poetically described as “energising before energy,” establishes on high the primordial types or patterns of things which are to be, and, then inscrutably latent, vests the development of these in the Rectores Mundorum, the divine Regents or powers already referred to. As it is said, “Mind is with Him, Power with them.”

The word “Intelligible” is used in the Platonic sense, to denote a mode of being, power or perception, transcending intellectual comprehension, i.e., wholly distinct from, and superior to, ratiocination. The Chaldæans recognised three modes of perception, viz., the testimony of the various senses, the ordinary processes of intellectual activity, and the intelligible conceptions before referred to. Each of these operations is distinct from the others, and, moreover, conducted in separate matrices, or vehicula. The anatomy of the Soul was, however, carried much farther than this, and, although in its ultimate radix recognised as identical with the divinity, yet in manifested being it was conceived to be highly complex. The Oracles speak of the “Paths of the Soul,” the tracings of inflexible fire by which its essential parts are associated in integrity; while its various “summits,” “fountains,” and “vehicula,” are all traceable by analogy with universal principles. This latter fact is, indeed, not the least remarkable feature of the Chaldæan system. Like several of the ancient cosmogonies, the principal characteristic of which seems to have been a certain adaptability to introversion, Chaldæan metaphysics synthesize most clearly in the human constitution.

In each of the Chaldæan Divine Worlds a trinity of divine powers operated, which synthetically constituted a fourth term. “In every World,” says the Oracle, “a Triad shineth, of which; the Monad is the ruling principle.” These “Monads” are the divine

Vice-gerents by which the Universe was conceived to be administered. Each of the four Worlds, viz., the Empyræan, Ethereal, Elementary and Material, was presided over by a Supreme Power, itself in direct rapport with “the Father” and “moved by unspeakable counsels.” These are clearly identical with the Kabalistic conception of the presidential heads of the four letters composing the Deity name in so many different languages. A parallel tenet is conveyed in the Oracle which runs: “There is a Venerable Name projected through the Worlds with a sleepless revolution.” The Kabalah again supplies the key to this utterance, by regarding the Four Worlds as under the presidency of the four letters of the Venerable Name, a certain letter of the four being allotted to each World, as also was a special mode of writing the four lettered name appropriate thereto; and, indeed in that system it is taught that the order of the Elements, both macrocosmic and microcosmic, on every plane, is directly controlled by the “revolution of the name.” That Name is associated with the æthers of the Elements and is thus considered as a Universal Law; it is the power which marshals the creative host, summed up in the Demiurgus, Hypezokos, or Flower of Fire.

Reference may here be made to the psychic anatomy of the human being according to Plato. He places the intellect in the head; the Soul endowed with some of the passions, such as fortitude, in the heart; while another Soul, of which the appetites, desires and grosser passions are its faculties, about the stomach and the spleen.

So, the Chaldæan doctrine as recorded by Psellus, considered man to be composed of three kinds of Souls, which may respectively be called:

First, the Intelligible, or divine soul,

Second, the Intellect or rational soul, and

Third, the Irrational, or passional soul.

This latter was regarded as subject to mutation, to be dissolved and perish at the death of the body.

Of the Intelligible, or divine soul, the Oracles teach that “It is a bright fire, which, by the power of the Father, remaineth immortal, and is Mistress of Life;” its power may be dimly apprehended through regenerate phantasy and when the sphere of the Intellect has ceased to respond to the images of the passional nature.

Concerning the rational soul, the Chaldæans taught that it was possible for it to assimilate itself unto the divinity on the one hand, or the irrational soul on the other. “Things divine,” we read, “cannot be obtained by mortals whose intellect is directed to the body alone, but those only who are stripped of their garments, arrive at the summit.”

To the three Souls to which reference has been made, the Chaldæans moreover allotted three distinct vehicles: that of the divine Soul was immortal, that: of the rational soul by approximation became so; while to the irrational soul was allotted what was called “the image,” that is, the astral form of the physical body.

Physical life thus integrates three special modes of activity, which upon the dissolution of the body are respectively involved in the web of fate consequent upon incarnate energies in three different destinies.

The Oracles urge men to devote themselves to things divine, and not to give way to the promptings of the irrational soul, for, to such as fail herein, it is significantly said, "Thy vessel the beasts of the earth shall inhabit."

The Chaldæans assigned the place of the Image, the vehicle of the irrational soul, to the Lunar Sphere; it is probable that by the Lunar Sphere was meant something more than the orb of the Moon, the whole sublunary region, of which the terrestrial earth is, as it were, the centre. At death, the rational Soul rose above the lunar influence, provided always the past permitted that happy release, Great importance was attributed to the way in which the physical life was passed during the sojourn of the Soul in the tenement of flesh, and frequent are the exhortations to rise to communion with those Divine powers, to which nought but the highest Theurgy can pretend.

"Let the immortal depth of your Soul lead you," says an Oracle, "but earnestly raise your eyes upwards." Taylor comments upon this in the following beautiful passage: "By the eyes are to be understood all the gnostic powers of the Soul, for when these are extended the Soul becomes replete. with a more excellent life and divine illumination; and is, as it were, raised above itself."

Of the Chaldæan Magi it might be truly said that they "among dreams did first discriminate the truthful vision!" for they were certainly endowed with a far reaching perception both mental and spiritual; attentive to images, and fired with mystic fervours, they were something more than mere theorists, but were also practical exemplars of the philosophy they taught. Life on the plains of Chaldæa, with its mild nights and jewelled skies, tended to foster the interior unfoldment; in early life the disciples of the Magi learnt to resolve the Bonds of proscription and enter the immeasurable region. One Oracle assures us that, "The girders of the Soul, which give her; breathing, are easy to be unloosed," and elsewhere we read of the "Melody of the Ether" and of the "Lunar clashings," experiences which testify to the reality of their occult methods.

The Oracles assert that the impressions of characters and other divine visions appear in the Ether. The Chaldæan philosophy recognized the ethers of the Elements as the subtil media through which the operation of the grosser elements is effected—by the grosser elements I mean what we know as Earth, Air, Water and Fire—the principles of dryness and moisture, of heat and cold. These subtil ethers are really the elements of the ancients, and seem at an early period to have been connected with the Chaldæan astrology, as the signs of the Zodiac were connected with them. The twelve signs of the Zodiac are permutations of the ethers of the elements—four elements with three variations each; and according to the preponderance of one or another elemental condition in the constitution of the individual, so were his natural inclinations deduced therefrom, Thus when in the astrological jargon it was said that a man had Aries rising, he was said to be of a fiery nature, his natural tendencies being active, energetic and

fiery, for in the constitution of such a one the fiery ether predominates. And these ethers were stimulated, or endowed with a certain kind of vibration, by their Presidents, the Planets; these latter being thus suspended in orderly disposed zones. Unto the Planets, too, colour and sound were also attributed; the planetary colours are connected with the ethers, and each of the Planetary forces was said to have special dominion over, or affinity with, one or other of the Zodiacal constellations. Communion with the hierarchies of these constellations formed part of the Chaldæan theurgy, and in a curious fragment it is said: "If thou often invokest it" (the celestial constellation called the Lion) "then when no longer is Visible unto thee the Vault of the Heavens, when the Stars have lost their light the lamp of the Moon is veiled, the Earth abideth not, and around thee darts the lightning flame, then all things will appear to thee in the form of a Lion!" The Chaldæans, like the Egyptians, appear to have had a highly developed appreciation of colours, an evidence of their psychic susceptibility. The use of bright colours engenders the recognition of subsisting variety and stimulates that perception of the mind which energizes through imagination, or the operation of images. The Chaldæan method of contemplation appears to have been to identify the self with the object of contemplation; this is of course identical with the process of Indian Yoga, and is an idea which appears replete with suggestion; as it is written "He assimilates the images to himself casting them around his own form." But we are told, "All divine natures are incorporeal, but bodies are bound in them for your sakes."

The subtil ethers, of which I have spoken, served in their turn as it were for the garment of the divine Light; for the Oracles teach that beyond these again "A solar world and endless Light subsist!" This Divine Light was the object of all veneration. Do not think that what was intended thereby was the Solar Light we know: "The inerratic sphere of the Starless above" is an unmistakable expression and therein "the more true Sun" has place: Theosophists will appreciate the significance of "the more true Sun," for according to The Secret Doctrine the Sun we see is but the physical vehicle of a more transcendent splendour.

Some strong Souls were able to reach up to the Light by their own power: "The mortal who approaches the fire shall have Light from the divinity, and unto the persevering mortal the blessed immortals are swift." But what of those of a lesser stature? Were they, by inability, precluded from such illumination? "Others," we read, "even when asleep, He makes fruitful from his own Strength." That is to say, some men acquire divine knowledge through communion with Divinity in sleep. This idea has given rise to some of the most magnificent contributions to later literature; it has since been thoroughly elaborated by Porphyry and Synesius. The eleventh Book of the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius and the *Vision of Scipio* ably vindicate this; and, although no doubt every Christian has heard that "He giveth unto his beloved in sleep," few, indeed, realise the possibility underlying that conception.

What, it may be asked, were the views of the Chaldæans with respect to terrestrial life: Was it a spirit of pessimism, which led them to hold this in light: esteem? Or, should we not rather say that the keynote of their philosophy was an immense spiritual optimism? It appeals to me that the latter is the more true interpretation. They realised that beyond the confines of matter lay a more perfect existence, a truer realm of which terrestrial

administration is but a too often travestied reflection. They sought, as we seek now, the Good, the Beautiful and the True, but they did not hasten to the Outer in the thirst for sensation, but with a finer perception realised the true Utopia to be within.

And the first step in that admirable progress was a return to the simple life; hardly, indeed, a return, for most of the Magi were thus brought up from birth." **** The hardihood engendered by the rugged life, coupled with that wisdom which directed their association, rendered these children of Nature peculiarly receptive of Nature's Truths. "Stoop not down," says the Oracle, "to the darkly splendid World, For a precipice lieth beneath the Earth, a descent of seven steps, and therein is established the throne of an evil and fatal force. Stoop not down unto that darkly splendid world, Defile not thy brilliant flame with the earthly dress of matter, Stoop not down for its splendour is but seeming, It is but the habitation of the Sons of the Unhappy." No more beautiful formulation of the Great Truth that the exterior and sensuous life is death to the highest energies of the Soul could possibly have been uttered: but to such as by purification and the practice of virtue rendered themselves worthy, encouragement was given, for, we read, "The Higher powers build up the body of the holy man."

The law of Karma was as much a feature of the Chaldæan philosophy as it is of the Theosophy of today: from a passage in Ficinus, we read, "The Soul perpetually runs and passes through all things in a certain space of time, which being performed it is presently compelled to pass back again through all things and unfold a similar web of generation in the World, according to Zoroaster, who thinks that as often as the same causes return, the same effects will in like manner return."

This is of course the explanation of the proverb that "History repeats itself" and is very far from the superstitious view of fate. Here each one receives his deserts according to merit or demerit, and these are the bonds of life; but the Oracles say, "Enlarge not thy destiny," and they urge men to "Explore the River of the Soul, so that although you have become a servant to body, you may again rise to the Order from which you descended, joining works to sacred reason!"

To this end we are commended to learn the Intelligible which exists beyond the mind, that divine portion of the being which exists beyond Intellect: and this it is only possible to grasp with the flower of the mind. "Understand the intelligible with the extended flame of an extended intellect." To Zoroaster also was attributed the utterance "who knows himself knows all things in himself;" while it is elsewhere suggested that "The paternal Mind has sowed symbols in the Soul," But such priceless knowledge was possible only to the Theurgists Who, we are told, "fall not so as to be ranked with the herd that are in subjection to fate." The divine light cannot radiate in an imperfect microcosm, even as the Clouds obscure the Sun; for of such as make ascent to the most divine of speculations in a confused and disordered manner, with unhallowed lips, or unwashed feet, the progressions are imperfect, the impulses are vain and the paths are dark.

Although destiny, our destiny, may be "written in the Stars" yet it was the mission of the divine Soul to raise the human Soul above the circle of necessity, and the Oracles give Victory to that Masterly Will, which

“Hews the wall with might of magic,

Breaks the palisade in pieces,

Hews to atoms seven pickets ...

Speaks the Master words of knowledge!”

The means taken to that consummation consisted in the training of the Will and the elevation of the imagination, a divine power which controls consciousness: “Relieve yourself to be above body, and you are,” says the Oracle; it might have added “Then shall regenerate phantasy disclose the symbols of the Soul.” But it is said “On beholding yourself fear!” i.e., the imperfect self.

Everything must be viewed as ideal by him who would understand the ultimate perfection.

Will is the grand agent in the mystic progress; its rule is all potent over the nervous system. By Will the fleeting vision is fixed on the treacherous waves of the astral Light; by Will the consciousness is impelled to commune with the divinity: yet there is not One Will, but three Wills—the Wills, namely, of the Divine, the Rational and Irrational Souls—to harmonize these is the difficulty.

It is selfishness which impedes the radiation of Thought, and attaches to body. This is scientifically true and irrespective of sentiment, the selfishness which reaches beyond the necessities of body is pure vulgarity.

A picture which to the cultured eye beautifully portrays a given subject, nevertheless appears to the savage a confused patchwork of streaks, so the extended perceptions of a citizen of the Universe are not grasped by those whose thoughts dwell within the sphere of the personal life.

The road to the Summum Bonum lies therefore through self-sacrifice, the sacrifice of the lower to the higher, for behind that Higher Self lies the concealed form of the Antient of Days, the synthetical Being of Divine Humanity.

These things are grasped by Soul; the song of the Soul is alone heard in the adytum of God-nourished Silence!

NOTES:

* This powerful Guild was the guardian of Chaldæan philosophy, which exceeded the bounds of their country, and diffused itself into Persia and Arabia that borders upon it; for which reason the learning of the Chaldæans, Persians and Arabians is

comprehended under the general title of Chaldæan.

**Diodorus, lib. I.

***Vide Kabbalah Denudata, by MacGregor Mathers.

****They renounced rich attire and the wearing of gold, Their raiment was white upon occasion; their beds the ground, and their food nothing but herbs, cheese and bread.

CAUSE. GOD.

FATHER. MIND. FIRE

MONAD. DYAD. TRIAD.

1. But God is He having the head of the Hawk. The same is the first, incorruptible, eternal, unbegotten, indivisible, dissimilar: the dispenser of all good; indestructible; the best of the good, the Wisest of the wise; He is the Father of Equity and Justice, self-taught, physical, perfect, and wise—He who inspires the Sacred Philosophy.

– Eusebius. *Præparatio Evangelica*, Liber. I., chap. X,

This Oracle does not appear in either of the ancient collections, nor in the group of oracles given by any of the mediaeval occultists. Cory seems to have been the first to discover it in the voluminous writings of Eusebius, who attributes the authorship to the Persian Zoroaster.

2. Theurgists assert that He is a God and celebrate him as both older and younger, as a circulating and eternal God, as understanding the whole number of all things moving in the World, and moreover infinite through his power and energizing a spiral force.

– Proclus on the *Timæus* of Plato, 244. Z. or T.

The Egyptian Pantheon had an Elder and a Younger Horus—a God—son of Osiris and Isis. Taylor suggests that He refers to Kronos, Time, or Chronos as the later Platonists wrote the name. Kronos, or Saturnus, of the Romans, was son of Uranos and Gaia, husband of Rhea, father of Zeus.

3. The God of the Universe, eternal, limitless, both young and old, having a spiral force.

Cory includes this Oracle in his collection, but he gives no authority for it. Lobek doubted its authenticity.

4. For the Eternal æon* —according to the Oracle— is the cause of never failing life, of unwearied power and unsluggish energy.

– Taylor.—T.

* “For the First æeon, the Eternal one,” or as Taylor gives, “Eternity.”

5. Hence the inscrutable God is called silent by the divine ones, and is said to consent with Mind, and to be known to human souls through the power of the Mind alone.

– Proclus in *Theologiam Platonis*, 321. T.

Inscrutable. Taylor gives “stable;” perhaps “incomprehensible” is better.

6. The Chaldæans call the God Dionysos (or Bacchus), Iao in the Phoenician tongue (instead of the Intelligible Light), and he is also called Sabaoth,* signifying that he is above the Seven poles, that is the Demiurgos.

– Lydus, *De Mensibus*, 83. T.

* This word is Chaldee, TzBAUT, meaning hosts; but there is also a word SHBOH, meaning “The Seven.”

7. Containing all things in the one summit of his own Hyparxis, He Himself subsists wholly beyond.

– Proclus in *Theologiam Platonis*, 212. T.

Hyparxis, is generally deemed to mean “Subsistence.” Hupar is Reality as distinct from appearance; Huparche is a Beginning.

8. Measuring and bounding all things.

– Proclus in *Theologiam Platonis*, 386. T.

“Thus he speaks the words,” is omitted by Taylor and Cory, but present in the Greek.

9. For nothing imperfect emanates from the Paternal Principle,

– Psellus, 38 ; Pletho. Z.

This implies—but only from a succedent emanation.

10. The Father effused not Fear, but He infused persuasion.

– Pletho. Z,

11. The Father hath apprehended Himself and hath not restricted his Fire to his own intellectual power.

– Psellus, 30; Pletho, 33. Z:

Taylor gives:—“The Father hath hastily withdrawn Himself, but hath not shut up his own Fire in his intellectual power.”

The Greek text has no word “hastily,” and as to “withdrawn—Arpazo means, grasp of snatch, but also “apprehend with the mind.”

12. Such is the Mind which is energized before energy, while yet it had not gone forth, but abode in the Paternal Depth, and in the Adytum of God nourished silence.

– Proc. in Tim., 167. T.

13. All things have issued from that one Fire. The Father perfected all things, and delivered them over to the Second Mind, whom all Nations of Men call the First.

– Psellus, 24; Pletho, 30. Z.

14. The Second Mind conducts the Empyrean. World .

– Damascius, De Principiis. T.

15. What the Intelligible saith, it saith by understanding.

– Psellus, 35. Z.

16. Power is with them, but Mind is from Him.

– Proclus in Platonis Theologiam, 365. T.

17. The Mind of the Father riding on the subtle Guiders, which glitter with the tracings of inflexible and relentless Fire.

– Proclus on the Cratylus of Plato.

18. ...After the Paternal Conception I the Soul reside, a heat animating all things. ...For he placed the Intelligible in the Soul, and the Soul in dull body, Even so the Father of Gods and Men placed them in us.

– Proclus in Tim., Plat., 124. Z. or T.

19. Natural works co-exist with the intellectual light of the Father. For it is the Soul which adorned the vast Heaven, and which adorneth it after the Father, but her dominion is established on high.

– Proclus in Tim., 106. Z. or T.

Dominion, krata: some copies give kerata, horus.

20. The Soul, being a brilliant Fire, by the power of the Father remaineth immortal, and is Mistress of Life, and filleth up the many recesses of the bosom of the World.

– Psellus, 28; Pletho, 11. Z.

21. The channels being intermixed therein she performeth the works of incorruptible Fire.

– Proclus in Politica, p. 399. Z. or T.

22. For not in Matter did the Fire which is in the first beyond enclose His active Power, but in Mind; for the framer of the Fiery World is the Mind of Mind.

– Proclus in Theologiam, 333, and Tim., 157. T.

23. Who first sprang from Mind, clothing the one Fire with the other Fire, binding them together, that he might mingle the fountainous craters, while preserving unsullied the brilliance of His own Fire.

– Proclus in Parm. Platonis. T.

24. And thence a Fiery Whirlwind drawing down the brilliance of the flashing flame, penetrating the abysses of the Universe; for from thence downwards do all extend their wondrous rays.

– Proclus in Theologiam Platonis, 171 and 172. T.

25. The Monad first existed, and the Paternal Monad still subsists.

– Proclus in Euclidem, 27. T.

26. When the Monad is extended, the Dyad is generated.

– Proclus in Euclidem, 27. T.

Note that “What the Pythagoreans signify by Monad, Duad and Triad, or Plato by Bound, Infinite and Mixed; that the Oracles of the Gods intend by Hyparxis, Power and Energy.”

– Damascius De Principiis. Taylor.

27. And beside Him is seated the Dyad which glitters with intellectual sections, to govern all things, and to order everything not ordered.

– Proclus in Platonis Theologiam, 376. T.

28. The Mind of the Father said that all things should be cut into Three, whose Will assented, and immediately all things were so divided.

– Proclus in Parmen. T.

29. The Mind of the Eternal Father said into Three, governing all things by Mind.

– Proclus, Timaeus of Plato. T.

30. The Father mingled every Spirit from this Triad.

– Lydus, De Mensibus, 20. Taylor.

31. All things are supplied from the bosom of this Triad.

– Lydus, De Mensibus, 20. Taylor.

32. All things are governed and subsist in this Triad.

– Proclus in I. Alcibiades. T.

33. For thou most know that all things bow before the Three Supernals.

– Damascius, De Principiis. T.

34. From thence floweth forth the Form of the Triad, being preexistent; not the first Essence, but that whereby all things are measured.

– Anon. Z. or T.

35. And there appeared in it Virtue and Wisdom, and multiscient Truth.

– Anon. Z. or T.

36. For in each World shineth the Triad, over which the Monad ruleth.

– Damascius in Parmenidem. T.

37. The First Course is Sacred, in the middle place courses the Sun,* in the third the Earth is heated by the internal fire.

– Anon. Z. or T.

*Jones gives Sun from Hellos, but some Greek versions give Herios, which Cory translates, air.

38. Exalted upon High and animating Light, Fire, Ether and Worlds.

– Simplicius in his Physica, 143. Z. or T.

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The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth

The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth

Translated by James Brashler, Peter A. Dirkse, and Douglas M. Parrott

“My father, yesterday you promised me that you would bring my mind into the eighth and afterwards you would bring me into the ninth. You said that this is the order of the tradition.”

"My son, indeed this is the order. But the promise was according to human nature. For I told you when I initiated the promise, I said, 'If you hold in mind each one of the steps.' After I had received the spirit through the power, I set forth the action for you. Indeed, the understanding dwells in you; in me (it is) as though the power were pregnant. For when I conceived from the fountain that flowed to me, I gave birth."

"My father, you have spoken every word well to me. But I am amazed at this statement that you have just made. For you said, 'The power that is in me'."
He said, "I gave birth to it (the power), as children are born."

"Then, my father, I have many brothers, if I am to be numbered among the offspring."
"Right, my son! This good thing is numbered by ... (3 lines missing) ... and [...] at all times. Therefore, my son, it is necessary for you to recognize your brothers and to honor them rightly and properly, because they come from the same father. For each generation I have called. I have named it, because they were offspring like these sons."

"Then, my father, do they have (a) day?"

"My son, they are spiritual ones. For they exist as forces that grow other souls. Therefore I say that they are immortal."

"Your word is true; it has no refutation from now on. My father, begin the discourse on the eighth and the ninth, and include me also with my brothers."

"Let us pray, my son, to the father of the universe, with your brothers who are my sons, that he may give the spirit of eloquence."

"How do they pray, my father, when joined with the generations? I want to obey, my father."

(2 lines missing) ... But it is not [...]. Nor is it a [...]. But he is satisfied with her [...] him [...]. And it is right for you to remember the progress that came to you as wisdom in the books, my son. Compare yourself to the early years of life. As children (do), you have posed senseless, unintelligent questions."

"My father, the progress that has come to me now, and the foreknowledge, according to the books, that has come to me, exceeding the deficiency - these things are foremost in me."

"My son, when you understand the truth of your statement, you will find your brothers, who are my sons, praying with you."

"My father, I understand nothing else except the beauty that came to me in the books."

"This is what you call the beauty of the soul, the edification that came to you in stages. May the understanding come to you, and you will teach."

"I have understood, my father, each one of the books. And especially the ... (2 lines missing) ... which is in [...]."

"My son, [...] in praises from those who extolled them."

"My father, from you I will receive the power of the discourse that you will give. As it was

told to both (of us), let us pray, my father.”

“My son, what is fitting is to pray to God with all our mind and all our heart and our soul, and to ask him that the gift of the eighth extend to us, and that each one receive from him what is his. Your part, then, is to understand; my own is to be able to deliver the discourse from the fountain that flows to me.”

“Let us pray, my father: I call upon you, who rules over the kingdom of power, whose word comes as (a) birth of light. And his words are immortal. They are eternal and unchanging. He is the one whose will begets life for the forms in every place. His nature gives form to substance. By him, the souls of the eighth and the angels are moved ... (2 lines missing) ... those that exist. His providence extends to everyone [...] begets everyone. He is the one who [...] the aeon among spirits. He created everything. He who is self-contained cares for everything. He is perfect, the invisible God to whom one speaks in silence - his image is moved when it is directed, and it governs - the one mighty power, who is exalted above majesty, who is better than the honored (ones),
Zoxathazo a oo ee ooo eee oooo ee oooooo oooooo oooooo uuuuuu oooooooooooooo ooo
Zozazoth.

“Lord, grant us a wisdom from your power that reaches us, so that we may describe to ourselves the vision of the eighth and the ninth. We have already advanced to the seventh, since we are pious and walk in your law. And your will we fulfill always. For we have walked in your way, and we have renounced [...], so that your vision may come. Lord, grant us the truth in the image. Allow us through the spirit to see the form of the image that has no deficiency, and receive the reflection of the pleroma from us through our praise.

“And acknowledge the spirit that is in us. For from you the universe received soul. For from you, the unbegotten one, the begotten one came into being. The birth of the self-begotten one is through you, the birth of all begotten things that exist. Receive from us these spiritual sacrifices, which we send to you with all our heart and our soul and all our strength. Save that which is in us and grant us the immortal wisdom.”

“Let us embrace each other affectionately, my son. Rejoice over this! For already from them the power, which is light, is coming to us. For I see! I see indescribable depths. How shall I tell you, my son? [...] from the [...] the places. How shall I describe the universe? I am Mind, and I see another Mind, the one that moves the soul! I see the one that moves me from pure forgetfulness. You give me power! I see myself! I want to speak! Fear restrains me. I have found the beginning of the power that is above all powers, the one that has no beginning. I see a fountain bubbling with life. I have said, my son, that I am Mind. I have seen! Language is not able to reveal this. For the entire eighth, my son, and the souls that are in it, and the angels, sing a hymn in silence. And I, Mind, understand.”

“What is the way to sing a hymn through it (silence)?”

“Have you become such that you cannot be spoken to?”

“I am silent, my father. I want to sing a hymn to you while I am silent.”

"Then sing it, for I am Mind."

"I understand Mind, Hermes, who cannot be interpreted, because he keeps within himself. And I rejoice, my father, because I see you smiling. And the universe rejoices. Therefore, there is no creature that will lack your life. For you are the lord of the citizens in every place. Your providence protects. I call you 'father', 'aeon of the aeons', 'great divine spirit'. And by a spirit he gives rain upon everyone. What do you say to me, my father, Hermes?"

"Concerning these things, I do not say anything, my son. For it is right before God that we keep silent about what is hidden."

"Trismegistus, let not my soul be deprived of the great divine vision. For everything is possible for you as master of the universe."

"Return to <praising>, my son, and sing while you are silent. Ask what you want in silence."

What he had finished praising, he shouted, "Father Trismegistus! What shall I say? We have received this light. And I myself see this same vision in you. And I see the eighth, and the souls that are in it, and the angels singing a hymn to the ninth and its powers. And I see him who has the power of them all, creating those <that are> in the spirit."

"It is advantageous from now on, that we keep silence in a reverent posture. Do not speak about the vision from now on. It is proper to sing a hymn to the father until the day to quit (the) body."

"What you sing, my father, I too want to sing."

"I am singing a hymn within myself. While you rest yourself, be active in praise. For you have found what you seek."

"But is it proper, my father, that I praise because I am filled in my heart?"

"What is proper is your praise that you will sing to God, so that it might be written in this imperishable book."

"I will offer up the praise in my heart, as I pray to the end of the universe and the beginning of the beginning, to the object of man's quest, the immortal discovery, the begetter of light and truth, the sower of reason, the love of immortal life. No hidden word will be able to speak about you, Lord. Therefore, my mind wants to sing a hymn to you daily. I am the instrument of your spirit; Mind is your plectrum. And your counsel plucks me. I see myself! I have received power from you. For your love has reached us."

"Right, my son."

"Grace! After these things, I give thanks by singing a hymn to you. For I have received life from you, when you made me wise. I praise you. I call your name that is hidden within me: a o ee o eee ooo iii oooo ooooo ooooo uuuuuu oo oooooooooo oooooooooo oo. You are the one who exists with the spirit. I sing a hymn to you reverently."

"My son, write this book for the temple at Diospolis in hieroglyphic characters, entitling it 'The Eighth Reveals the Ninth.'"

“I will do it, my <father>, as you command now.”

“My <son>, write the language of the book on steles of turquoise. My son, it is proper to write this book on steles of turquoise, in hieroglyphic characters. For Mind himself has become overseer of these. Therefore, I command that this teaching be carved on stone, and that you place it in my sanctuary. Eight guardians guard it with [...] of the Sun. The males on the right are frog-faced, and the females on the left are cat-faced. And put a square milk-stone at the base of the turquoise tablets, and write the name on the azure stone tablet in hieroglyphic characters. My son, you will do this when I am in Virgo, and the sun is in the first half of the day, and fifteen degrees have passed by me.”

“My father, everything that you say I will do eagerly.”

“And write an oath in the book, lest those who read the book bring the language into abuse, and not (use it) to oppose the acts of fate. Rather, they should submit to the law of God, without having transgressed at all, but in purity asking God for wisdom and knowledge. And he who will not be begotten at the start by God comes to be by the general and guiding discourses. He will not be able to read the things written in this book, although his conscience is pure within him, since he does not do anything shameful, nor does he consent to it. Rather, by stages he advances and enters into the way of immortality. And thus he enters into the understanding of the eighth that reveals the ninth.”

“So shall I do it, my father.”

“This is the oath: I make him who will read this holy book swear by heaven and earth, and fire and water, and seven rulers of substance, and the creating spirit in them, and the <unbegotten> God, and the self-begotten one, and him who has been begotten, that he will guard the things that Hermes has said. And those who keep the oath, God will be reconciled with them and everyone whom we have named. But wrath will come to each one of those who violate the oath. This is the perfect one who is, my son.”

Selection made from James M. Robinson, ed., The Nag Hammadi Library, revised edition. HarperCollins, San Francisco, 1990.

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The Sepher Yetzirah

The Sepher Yetzirah
Translated from the Hebrew by William Wynn Westcott

(NOTE: The Sepher Yetzirah is one of the most famous of the ancient Qabalistic texts. It was first put into writing around 200 C.E. Westcott's Translation of the Sepher Yetzirah was a primary source for the rituals and Knowledge Lectures of the Golden Dawn. This is the Third Edition of Westcott's translation, first published in 1887. A Fourth Revised Edition of the Sepher Yetzirah by Darcy Kúntz, complete with Hebrew text, notes and bibliography, is available from Holmes Publishing Group, P.O. 623, Edmonds, WA 98020.)

INTRODUCTION

The “Sepher Yetzirah,” or “Book of Formation,” is perhaps the oldest Rabbinical treatise of Kabalistic philosophy which is still extant. The great interest which has been evinced of late years in the Hebrew Kabbalah, and the modes of thought and doctrine allied to it, has induced me to translate this tractate from the original Hebrew texts, and to collate with them the Latin versions of mediaeval authorities; and I have also published An Introduction to the Kabbalah which may be found useful to students.

Three important books of the “Zohar,” or “Book of Splendour,” which is a great storehouse of Kabalistic teaching, have been translated into English by S. L. MacGregor Mathers, and the “Sepher Yetzirah” in an English translation is almost a necessary companion to these abstruse disquisitions: the two books indeed mutually explain each other.

The “Sepher Yetzirah,” although this name means “The Book of Formation,” is not in any sense a narrative of Creation, or a substitute Genesis, but is an ancient and instructive philosophical treatise upon one aspect of the origin of the universe and mankind; an aspect at once archaic and essentially Hebrew. The grouping of the processes of origin into an arrangement, at once alphabetic and numeral, is one only to be found in Semitic authors.

Attention must be called to the essential peculiarity of the Hebrew language, the inextricable and necessary association of numbers and letters; every letter suggesting a number, and every group of letters having a numerical signification, as vital as its literal meaning.

The Kabalistic principles involved in the reversal of Hebrew letters, and their substitution by others, on definite schemes, should also be studied and borne in mind.

It is exactly on these principles that the “ground-work idea” of this disquisition rests; and these principles may be traced throughout the Kabalistic tractates which have succeeded it in point of time and development, many of which are associated together in one volume known as the “Zohar,” which is in the main concerned with the essential dignities of the Godhead, with the Emanations which have sprung therefrom, with the doctrine of the Sephiroth, the ideals of Macroprosopus and Microprosopus, and the doctrine of Re-incarnation.

The “Sepher Yetzirah,” on the other hand, is mainly concerned with our universe and with the Microcosm. The opinions of Hebrew Kabalistic Rabbis and of modern mystics may be fitly introduced here.

The following interesting quotation is from Rabbi Moses Botarel, who wrote his famous Commentary in 1409:—“It was Abraham our Father—blessed be he—who wrote this book to condemn the doctrine of the sages of his time, who were incredulous of the supreme dogma of the Unity. At least, this was the opinion of Rabbi Saadiah—blessed be he—as written in the first chapter of his book The Philosopher's Stone. These are his words: The sages of Babylon attacked Abraham on account of his faith; for they were all against him although themselves separable into three sects. The First thought that the

Universe was subject to the control of two opposing forces, the one existing but to destroy the other, this is dualism; they held that there was nothing in common between the author of evil and the author of good. The Second sect admitted Three great Powers; two of them as in the first case, and a third Power whose function was to decide between the two others, a supreme arbitrator. The Third sect recognised no god beside the Sun, in which it recognised the sole principle of existence.”

Rabbi Judah Ha Lévi (who flourished about 1120), in his critical description of this treatise, wrote: “The Sepher Yetzirah teaches us the existence of a Single Divine Power by shewing us that in the bosom of variety and multiplicity there is a Unity and Harmony, and that such universal concord could only arise from the rule of a Supreme Unity.”

According to Isaac Myer, in his Quabbalah (p. 159), the “Sepher Yetzirah” was referred to in the writings of Ibn Gebirol of Cordova, commonly called Avicbron, who died in A.D. 1070.

Eliphas Levi, the famous French Occultist, thus wrote of the “Sepher Yetzirah,” in his *Histoire de la Magie*, p. 54: “The Zohar is a Genesis of illumination, the Sepher Jezirah is a ladder formed of truths. Therein are explained the thirty-two absolute signs of sounds, numbers and letters: each letter reproduces a number, an idea and a form; so that mathematics are capable of application to ideas and to forms not less rigorously than to numbers, by exact proportion and perfect correspondence. By the science of the Sepher Jezirah the human spirit is fixed to truth, and in reason, and is able to take account of the possible development of intelligence by the evolutions of numbers. The Zohar represents absolute truth, and the Sepher Jezirah provides the means by which we may seize, appropriate and make use of it.”

Upon another page Eliphas Lévi writes: “The Sepher Jezirah and the Apocalypse are the masterpieces of Occultism; they contain more wisdom than words; their expression is as figurative as poetry, and at the same time it is as exact as mathematics.

In the volume entitled *La Kabbale* by the eminent French scholar, Adolphe Franck, there is a chapter on the “Sepher Yetzirah.” He writes as follows:—

“The Book of Formation contains, I will not say system of physics, but of cosmology such as could be conceived at an age and in a country where the habit of explaining all phenomena by the immediate action of the First Cause, tended to check the spirit of observation, and where in consequence certain general and superficial relations perceived in the natural world passed for the science of Nature.”...“Its form is simple and grave; there is nothing like a demonstration nor an argument; but it consists rather of a series of aphorisms, regularly grouped, and which have all the conciseness of the most ancient oracles.”

In his analysis of the “Sepher Yetzirah,” he adds:—“The Book of Formation, even if it be not very voluminous, and if it do not altogether raise us to very elevated regions of thought, yet offers us at least a composition which is very homogeneous and of a rare originality. The clouds which the imagination of commentators have gathered around it,

will be dissipated, if we look for, in it, not mysteries of ineffable wisdom, but an attempt at a reasonable doctrine, made when reason arose, an effort to grasp the plan of the universe, and to secure the link which binds to one common principle, all the elements which are around us.”

“The last word of this system is the substitution of the absolute divine Unity for every idea of Dualism, for that pagan philosophy which saw in matter an eternal substance whose laws were not in accord with Divine Will; and for the Biblical doctrine, which by its idea of Creation, postulates two things, the Universe and God, as two substances absolutely distinct one from the other.

“In fact, in the 'Sepher Yetzirah,' God considered as the Infinite and consequently the indefinable Being, extended throughout all things by his power and existence, is while above, yet not outside of numbers, sounds and letters—the principles and general laws which we recognise.”

“Every element has its source from a higher form, and all things have their common origin from the Word (Logos), the Holy Spirit.... So God is at once, in the highest sense, both the matter and the form of the universe. Yet He is not only that form; for nothing can or does exist outside of Himself; His substance is the foundation of all, and all things bear His imprint and are symbols of His intelligence.”

Hebrew tradition assigns the doctrines of the oldest portions of the “Zohar” to a date antecedent to the building of the Second Temple, but Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai, who lived in the reign of the Emperor Titus, A.D. 70-80, is considered to have been the first to commit these to writing, and Rabbi Moses de Leon, of Guadalaxara, in Spain, who died in 1305, certainly reproduced and published the “Zohar.”

Ginsburg, speaking of the Zoharic doctrines of the Ain Suph, says that they were unknown until the thirteenth century, but he does not deny the great antiquity of the “Sepher Yetzirah,” in which it will be noticed the “Ain Suph Aur” and “Ain Suph” are not mentioned. I suggest, however, that this omission is no proof that the doctrines of “Ain Suph Aur” and “Ain Suph” did not then exist, because it is a reasonable supposition that the “Sepher Yetzirah” was the volume assigned to the Yetziratic World, the third of the four Kabalistic Worlds of Emanation, while the “Asch Metzareph” is concerned with the Assiatic, fourth, or lowest World of Shells, and is on the face of it an alchemical treatise; and again the “Siphra Dtzenioutha” may be fittingly considered to be an Aziluthic work, treating of the Emanations of Deity alone; and there was doubtless a fourth work assigned to the World of Briah—the second type, but I have not been able to identify this treatise. Both the Babylonian and the Jerusalem Talmuds refer to the “Sepher Yetzirah.” Their treatise, named “Sanhedrin,” certainly mentions the “Book of Formation,” and another similar work; and Rashi in his commentary on the treatise “Erubin,” considers this a reliable historical notice. Other historical notices are those of Saadya Gaon, who died A.D. 940, and Judah Ha Levi, A.D. 1150; both these Hebrew classics speak of it as a very ancient work. Some modern critics have attributed the authorship to the Rabbi Akiba, who lived in the time of the Emperor Hadrian, A.D. 120, and lost his life in supporting the claims of Barchocheba, a false messiah: others suggest it was first

written about A.D. 200.

Graetz however assigns it to early Gnostic times, third or fourth century, and Zunz speaks of it as post Talmudical, and belonging to the Geonim period 700-800 A.D.; Rubinsohn, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, speaks of this latter idea as having no real basis.

The Talmuds were first collected into a concrete whole, and printed in Venice, 1520 A.D.

The "Zohar" was first printed in Mantua in 1558; again in Cremona, 1560; and at Lublin, 1623; and a fourth edition by Knorr von Rosenroth, at Sulzbach in 1684. Some parts are not very ancient, because the Crusades are mentioned in one chapter. Six extant Hebrew editions of the "Sepher Yetzirah" were collected and printed at Lemberg in 1680. The oldest of these six recensions was that of Saadjah Gaon (by some critics called spurious). There are still extant three Latin versions, viz., that of Gulielmus Postellus; one by Johann Pistorius; and a third by Joannes Stephanus Rittangelius; this latter gives both Hebrew and Latin versions, and also "The Thirty-Two Paths" as a supplement.

There is a German translation, by Johann Friedrich von Meyer, dated 1830; a version by Isidor Kalisch, in which he has reproduced many of the valuable annotations of Meyer; an edition in French by Papus, 1888; an edition in French by Mayer Lambert, 1891, with the Arabic Commentary of Saadya Gaon; and an English edition by Peter Davidson, 1896, to which are added "The Fifty Gates of Intelligence" and "The Thirty-Two Ways of Wisdom." The edition which I now offer is fundamentally that of the ancient Hebrew codices translated into English, and collated with the Latin versions of Pistorius, Postellus, and Rittangelius, following the latter, rather than the former commentators. As to the authenticity of "The Sepher Yetzirah," students may refer to the *Bibliotheca magna Rabbinica* of Bartoloccio de Cellario, Rome, 1678-1692; to Basnage, *History of the Jews*, 1708; and to *The Doctrine and Literature of the Kabbalah*, by A. B. Waite, 1902. The following copies of the "Sepher Yetzirah" in Hebrew, I have also examined, but only in a superficial manner:—

1. A Version by Saadiah, Ab. ben David, and three others, Mantua, 1562, 4to.
2. A Version with the commentary of Rabbi Abraham F. Dior, Amsterdam, 1642, 4to.
3. A Version with preface by M. ben J. Chagiz, Amsterdam, 1713, 16mo. 4. A Version, Constantinople, 1719, 8vo.
5. " " Zolkiew, 1745, 4to.
6. " " by Moses ben Jacob, Zozec, 1779, 4to.
7. " " Grodno, 1806, 4to.
8. " " Dyhernfurth, 1812, 8vo.

9. “ ” Salonica, 1831, 8vo.

10. A MS. copy dated 1719, in the British Museum.

I add here the full titles of the three Latin versions; they are all to be found in the British Museum Library.

“Abrahami Patriarchae Liber Jezirah sive Formationis Mundi, Patribus quidem Abrahami tempora praecedentibus revelatus, sed ab ipso etiam Abrahamo expositus Isaaco, et per pro prophetarum manus posteritati conservatus, ipsis autem 72 Mosis auditoribus in secundo divinae veritatis loco, hoc est in ratione, quoe est posterior autoritate, habitus.” Parisiis, 1552. Gulielmus Postellus. “Id est Liber Jezirah, qui Abrahamo, Patriarchae adscribitur, una cum Commentario Rabbi Abraham F.D. super 32 semitis Sapientiae, a quibus Liber Jezirah incipit: Translatus et notis illustratus a Joanne Stephano Rittangelio, Ling. Orient. in Elect. Acad. Regiomontana Prof. Extraord,” Amstelodami, 1642. In Tomas Primus of “Artis Cabalisticae hoc est reconditae theologiae et philosophiae scriptorum.” Basileae 1587, is found “Liber de Creatione Cabalisticis, Hebraice Sepher Jezira; Authore Abrahamo. Successive filiis ore traditus. Hinc jam rebus Israel inclinatis ne deficeret per sapientes Hierusalem arcanis et profundissimis sensibus literis commendatus.” Johannes Pistorius.

The “Sepher Yetzirah” consists of six chapters, having 33 paragraphs distributed among them, in this manner: the first has 12, then follow 5, 5, 4, 3, and 4.

Yet in some versions the paragraphs and subject-matter are found in a different arrangement. The oldest title has, as an addition, the words, “The Letters of our Father Abraham” or “ascribed to the patriarch Abraham,” and it is spoken of as such by many mediaeval authorities: but this origin is doubtless fabulous, although perhaps not more improbable than the supposed authorship of the “Book of Enoch,” mentioned by St. Jude, of which two MSS. copies in the Ethiopic language were rescued from the wilds of Abyssinia in 1773 by the great traveller James Bruce. In essence this work was, doubtless, the crystallisation of centuries of tradition, by one writer, and it has been added to from time to time, by later authors, who have also revised it. Some of the additions, which were rejected even by mediaeval students, I have not incorporated with the text at all, and I present in this volume only the undoubted kernel of this occult nut, upon which many great authorities, Hebrew, German, Jesuit and others, have written long Commentaries, and yet have failed to explain satisfactorily. I find Kalisch, speaking of these Commentaries, says, “they contain nothing but a medley of arbitrary explanations, and sophistical distortions of scriptural verses, astrological notions, Oriental superstitions, a metaphysical jargon, a poor knowledge of physics, and not a correct elucidation of this ancient book.” Kalisch, however, was not an occultist; these commentaries are, however, so extensive as to demand years of study, and I feel no hesitation in confessing that my researches into them have been but superficial. For convenience of study I have placed the Notes in a separate form at the end of the work, and I have made a short definition of the subject-matter of each chapter. The substance of this little volume was read as Lecture before “The Hermetic Society of London,” in the

summer of 1886, Dr. Anna Kingsford, President, in the chair. Some of the Notes were the explanations given verbally, and subsequently in writing, to members of the Society who asked for information upon abstruse points in the “Sepher,” and for collateral doctrines; others, of later date, are answers which have been given to students of Theosophy and Hermetic philosophy, and to my pupils of the Study Groups of the Rosicrucian Society of England.

SEPHER YETZIRAH

SEPHER YETZIRAH

The Book of Formation

CHAPTER I

Section 1. In thirty-two (1) mysterious Paths of Wisdom did Jah, (2) the Jehovah of hosts, (3) the God of Israel, (4) the Living Elohim, (5) the King of ages, the merciful and gracious God, (6) the Exalted One, the Dweller in eternity, most high and holy—engrave his name by the three Sepharim (7) –Numbers, Letters, and Sounds.(8)

2. Ten are the ineffable Sephiroth. (9) Twenty-two are the Letters, the Foundation of all things; there are Three Mothers, Seven Double and Twelve (10) Simple letters.

3. The ineffable Sephiroth are Ten, as are the Numbers; and as there are in man five fingers over against five, so over them is established a covenant of strength, by word of mouth, and by the circumcision of the flesh. (11)

4. Ten is the number of the ineffable Sephiroth, ten and not nine, ten and not eleven. Understand this wisdom, and be wise by the perception. Search out concerning it, restore the Word to its creator, and replace Him who formed it upon his throne. (12)

5. The Ten ineffable Sephiroth have ten vast regions bound unto them; boundless in origin and having no ending; an abyss (13) of good and of ill; measureless height and depth; boundless to the East and the West; boundless to the North and South; (14) and the Lord the only God, (15) the Faithful King rules all these from his holy seat, (16) for ever and ever.

6. The Ten ineffable Sephiroth have the appearance of the Lightning flash, (17) their origin is unseen and no end is perceived. The Word is in them as they rush forth and as they return, they speak as from the whirl-wind, and returning fall prostrate in adoration before the Throne.

7. The Ten ineffable Sephiroth, whose ending is even as their origin, are like as a flame arising from a burning coal. For God (18) is superlative in his Unity, there is none equal unto Him: what number canst thou place before One.

8. Ten are the ineffable Sephiroth; seal up thy lips lest thou speak of them, and guard thy heart as thou considerest them; and if thy mind escape from thee bring it back to thy control; even as it was said, “running and returning” (the living creatures ran and returned) (19) and hence was the Covenant made.

9. The ineffable Sephiroth give forth the Ten numbers. First; the Spirit of the God of the living; (20) Blessed and more than blessed be the Living God (21) of ages. The Voice, the Spirit, and the Word, (22) these are the Holy Spirit.

10. Second; from the Spirit He produced Air, and formed in it twenty-two sounds—the letters; three are mothers, seven are double, and twelve are simple; but the Spirit is first and above these. Third; from the Air He formed the Waters, and from the formless and void (23) made mire and clay, and designed surfaces upon them, and hewed recesses in them, and formed the strong material foundation. Fourth; from the Water He formed Fire (24) and made for Himself a Throne of Glory with Auphanim, Seraphim and Kerubim, (25) as his ministering angels; and with these three (26) he completed his dwelling, as it is written, “Who maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flaming fire.” (27)

11. He selected three letters from among the simple ones and sealed them and formed them into a Great Name, I H V, (28) and with this He sealed the universe in six directions.

Fifth; He looked above, and sealed the Height with I H V.

Sixth; He looked below, and sealed the Depth with I V H.

Seventh; He looked forward, and sealed the East with H I V.

Eighth; He looked backward, and sealed the West with H V I.

Ninth; He looked to the right, and sealed the South with V I H.

Tenth; He looked to the left, and sealed the North with V H I.

12. Behold! From the Ten ineffable Sephiroth do, proceed—the One Spirit of the Gods of the living, Air, Water, Fire; and also Height, Depth, East, West, South and North. (29)

CHAPTER II

Section 1. The twenty-two sounds and letters are the Foundation of all things. Three mothers, seven doubles and twelve simples. The Three Mothers are Aleph, Mem and Shin, they are Air, Water and Fire Water is silent, Fire is sibilant, and Air derived from the Spirit is as the tongue of a balance standing between these contraries which are in equilibrium, reconciling and mediating between them.

2. He hath formed, weighed, and composed with these twenty-two letters every created thing, and the form of everything which shall hereafter be.

3. These twenty-two sounds or letters are formed by the voice, impressed on the air, and audibly modified in five places; in the throat, in the mouth, by the tongue, through the teeth, and by the lips. (31)

4. These twenty-two letters, which are the foundation of all things, He arranged as upon a sphere with two hundred and thirty-one gates, and the sphere may be rotated forward or backward, whether for good or for evil; from the good comes true pleasure, from evil nought but torment.

5. For He shewed the combination of these letters, each with the other; Aleph with all, and all with Aleph; Beth with all, and all with Beth. Thus in combining all together in pairs are produced the two hundred and thirty-one gates of knowledge. (32)

6. And from the non-existent (33) He made Something; and all forms of speech and everything that has been produced; from the empty void He made the material world, and from the inert earth He brought forth everything that hath life. He hewed, as it were, vast columns out of the intangible air, and by the power of His Name made every creature and everything that is; and the production of all things from the twenty-two letters is the proof that they are all but parts of one living body. (34)

CHAPTER III

Section 1. The Foundation of all the other sounds and letters is provided by the Three Mothers, Aleph, Mem and Shin; they resemble a Balance, on the one hand the guilty, on the other hand the purified, and Aleph the Air is like the Tongue of a Balance standing between them. (35)

2. The Three Mothers, Aleph, Mem and Shin, are a great Mystery, very admirable and most recondite, and sealed as with six rings; and from them proceed Air, Fire, and Water, which divide into active and passive forces. The Three Mothers, Aleph, Mem and Shin, are the Foundation, from them spring three Fathers, and from these have proceeded all things that are in the world.

3. The Three Mothers in the world are Aleph, Mem and Shin: the heavens (36) were produced (37) from Fire; the earth from the Water; and the Air from the Spirit is as a reconciler between the Fire and the Water.

4. The Three Mothers, Aleph, Mem and Shin, Fire, Water and Air, are shown in the Year: from the fire came heat, from the waters came cold, and from the air was produced the temperate state, again a mediator between them. The Three Mothers, Aleph, Mem and Shin, Fire, Water and Air, are found in Man: from the fire was formed the head; from the water the belly; and from the air was formed the chest, again placed as a mediator between the others.

5. These Three Mothers did He produce and design, and combined them; and He sealed them as the three mothers in the Universe, in the Year and in Man—both male and female. He caused the letter Aleph to reign in Air and crowned it, and combining it with the others He sealed it, as Air in the World, as the temperate (climate) of the Year, and as the breath in the chest (the lungs for breathing air) in Man: the male with Aleph, Mem, Shin, the female with Shin, Mem, Aleph. He caused the letter Mem to reign in Water, crowned it, and combining it with the others formed the earth in the world, cold in

the year, and the belly in man, male and female, the former with Mem, Aleph, Shin, the latter with Mem, Shin, Aleph. He caused Shin to reign in Fire, and crowned it, and combining it with the others sealed with it the heavens in the universe, heat in the year and the head in man, male and female. (38)

CHAPTER IV

Section 1. The Seven double letters, Beth, Gimel, Daleth, Kaph, Peh, Resh, and Tau have each two sounds associated with them. They are referred to Life, Peace, Wisdom, Riches, Grace, Fertility and Power. The two sounds of each letter are the hard and the soft—the aspirated and the softened. They are called Double, because each letter presents a contrast or permutation; thus Life and Death; Peace and War; Wisdom and Folly; Riches and Poverty; Grace and Indignation; Fertility and Solitude; Power and Servitude. 2. These Seven Double Letters point out seven localities; Above, Below, East, West, North, South, and the Palace of Holiness in the midst of them sustaining all things.

3. These Seven Double Letters He designed, produced, and combined, and formed with them the Planets of this World, the Days of the Week, and the Gates of the soul (the orifices of perception) in Man. From these Seven He bath produced the Seven Heavens, the Seven Earths, the Seven Sabbaths: for this cause He has loved and blessed the number Seven more than all things under Heaven (His Throne).

4. Two Letters produce two houses; three form six; four form twenty-four; five form one hundred and twenty; six form seven hundred and twenty; (39) seven form five thousand and forty; and beyond this their numbers increase so that the mouth can hardly utter them, nor the ear hear the number of them. So now, behold the Stars of our World, the Planets which are Seven; the Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon, Saturn, Jupiter and Mars. The Seven are also the Seven Days of Creation; and the Seven Gateways of the Soul of Man—the two eyes, the two ears, the mouth and the two nostrils. So with the Seven are formed the seven heavens, (41) the seven earths, and the seven periods of time; and so has He preferred the number Seven above all things under His Heaven. (42)

Supplement to Chapter IV

NOTE.—This is one of several modern illustrations of the allotment of the Seven Letters; it is not found in the ancient copies of the “Sepher Yetzirah.” He produced Beth, and referred it to Wisdom ; He crowned it, combined and formed with it the Moon in the Universe, the first day of the week, and the right eye of man.

He produced Gimel, and referred it to Health; He crowned it, combined and joined with it Mars in the Universe, the second day of the week, and the right ear of man.

He produced Daleth, and referred it to Fertility; He crowned it, combined and formed with it the Sun in the Universe, the third day of the week, and the right nostril of man.

He produced Kaph, and referred it to Life; He crowned it, combined and formed with it Venus in the Universe, the fourth day of the week, and the left eye of man.

He produced Peh, and referred it to Power; He crowned it, combined and formed with it Mercury in the Universe, the fifth day of the week, and the left ear of man.

He produced Resh, and referred it to Peace; He crowned it, combined and formed with it Saturn in the Universe, the sixth day of the week, and the left nostril of man.

He produced Tau, and referred it to Beauty; He crowned it, combined and formed with it Jupiter in the Universe, the Seventh Day of the week, and the mouth of man.

By these Seven letters were also made seven worlds, seven heavens, seven earths, seven seas, seven rivers, seven deserts, seven days, seven weeks from Passover to Pentecost, and every seventh year a Jubilee.

Mayer Lambert gives:—Beth to Saturn and the Hebrew Sabbath—that is Saturday; Gimel to Jupiter and Sunday; Daleth to Mars and Monday; Kaph to the Sun and Tuesday; Peh to Venus and Wednesday; Resh to Mercury and Thursday; and Tau to the Moon and Friday.

CHAPTER V

1. The Twelve Simple Letters are Héh, Vau, Zain, Cheth, Teth, Yod, Lamed, Nun, Samech, Oin, Tzaddi and Qoph; (43) they are the foundations of these twelve properties: Sight, Hearing, Smell, Speech, Taste, Sexual Love, Work, Movement, Anger, Mirth, Imagination, (44) and Sleep. These Twelve are also allotted to the directions in space: North-east, South-east, the East above, the East below, the North above, the North below, the South-west, the Northwest, the West above, the West below, the South above, and the South below; these diverge to infinity, and are as the arms of the Universe.

2. These Twelve Simple Letters He designed, and combined, and formed with them the Twelve celestial constellations of the Zodiac, whose signs are Teth, Shin, Tau, Samech, Aleph, Beth, Mem, Oin, Qoph, Gimel, Daleth, and Daleth. (45) The Twelve are also the Months of the Year: Nisan, (46) Yiar, Sivan, Tamuz, Ab, Elul, Tishri, Hesvan, Kislev, Tebet, Sabat and Adar. The Twelve are also the Twelve organs of living creatures: (47) the two hands, the two feet, the two kidneys, the spleen, the liver, the gall, private parts, stomach and intestines.

He made these, as it were provinces, and arranged them as in order of battle for warfare. And also the Elohim (48) made one from the region of the other.

Three Mothers and Three Fathers; and thence issue Fire, Air and Water. Three Mothers, Seven Doubles and Twelve Simple letters and sounds.

3. Behold now these are the Twenty and Two Letters from which Jah, Jehovah Tzabaoth, the Living Elohim, the God of Israel, exalted and sublime, the Dweller in eternity, formed and established all things; High and Holy is His Name.

Supplement to Chapter V

NOTE.—This is a modern illustration of the allotment of the Twelve Letters; it is not found in the ancient copies of the “Sepher Yetzirah.”

1. God produced Hé predominant in Speech, crowned it, combined and formed with it Aries in the Universe, Nisan in the Year, and the right foot of Man.
2. He produced Vau, predominant in mind, crowned it, combined and formed with it Taurus in the Universe, Aiar in the Year, and the right kidney of Man.
3. He produced Zain, predominant in Movement crowned it, combined and formed it with Gemini in the Universe, Sivan in the Year, and the left foot of Man.
4. He produced Cheth, predominant in Sight, crowned it, combined and formed it with Cancer in the Universe, Tammuz in the year, and the right hand of Man.
5. He produced Teth, predominant in Hearing, crowned it, combined and formed with it Leo in the Universe, Ab in the Year, and the left kidney in Man.
6. He produced Yod, predominant in Work, crowned it, combined and formed with it Virgo in the Universe, Elul in the Year, and the left hand of Man.
7. He produced Lamed, predominant in Sexual desire, crowned it, combined and formed with it Libra in the Universe, Tishri in the Year, and the private parts of Man. (Kalisch gives “gall.”)
8. He produced Nun, predominant in Smell, crowned it, combined and formed with it Scorpio in the Universe, Heshvan in the Year, and the intestines of Man.
9. He produced Samech, predominant in Sleep, crowned it, combined and formed with it Sagittarius in the Universe, Kislev in the Year, and the stomach of Man.
10. He produced Oin, predominant in Anger, crowned it, combined and formed with it Capricornus in the Universe, Tebet in the Year, and the liver of Man.
11. He produced Tzaddi, predominant in Taste, crowned it, combined and formed with it Aquarius in the Year, and the gullet in Man).
12. He produced Qoph, predominant in Mirth, crowned it, combined and formed with it Pisces in the Universe, Adar in the Year, and the spleen of Man.

NOTE.—Mediaeval authorities and modern editors give very different allocations to the twelve simple letters.

CHAPTER VI

Section 1. Three Fathers and their generations, Seven conquerors and their armies, and Twelve bounds of the Universe. See now, of these words, the faithful witnesses are the Universe, the Year and Man. The dodecad, the heptad, and the triad with their

provinces; above is the Celestial Dragon, T L I, (49) and below is the World, and lastly the heart of Man. The Three are Water, Air and Fire; Fire above, Water below, and Air conciliating between them; and the sign of these things is that the Fire sustains (volatilises) the waters; Mem is mute, Shin is sibilant, and Aleph is the Mediator and as it were a friend placed between them.

2. The Celestial Dragon, T L I, is placed over the universe like a king upon the throne; the revolution of the year is as a king over his dominion; the heart of man is as a king in warfare. Moreover, He made all things one from the other; and the Elohim set good over against evil, and made good things from good, and evil things from evil: with the good tested He the evil, and with the evil did He try the good. Happiness (50) is reserved for the good, and misery (51) is kept for the wicked.

3. The Three are One, and that One stands above. The Seven are divided; three are over against three, and one stands between the triads. The Twelve stand as in warfare; three are friends, three are enemies; three are life givers; three are destroyers. The three friends are the heart, the ears, and the mouth; the three enemies are the liver, the gall, and the tongue; (52) while God (53) the faithful king rules over all. One above Three, Three above Seven, and Seven above Twelve: and all are connected the one with the other.

4. And after that our father Abraham had perceived and understood, and had taken down and engraved all these things, the Lord most high (55) revealed Himself, and called him His beloved, and made a Covenant with him and his seed; and Abraham believed on Him (56) and it was imputed unto him for righteousness. And He made this Covenant as between the ten toes of the feet—this is that of circumcision; and as between the ten fingers of the hands and this is that of the tongue. (57) And He formed the twenty-two letters into speech (58) and shewed him all the mysteries of them. (59) He drew them through the Waters; He burned them in the Fire; He vibrated them in the Air; Seven planets in the heavens, and Twelve celestial constellations of the stars of the Zodiac.

— The End of “The Book of Formation” —

THE FIFTY GATES OF INTELLIGENCE

Attached to some editions of the “Sepher Yetzirah” is found this scheme of Kabalistic classification of knowledge emanating from the Second Sephira Binah, Understanding, and descending by stages through the angels, heavens, humanity, animal and vegetable and mineral kingdoms to Hyle and the chaos. The Kabalists said that one must enter and pass up through the Gates to attain to the Thirty-two Paths of Wisdom; and that even Moses only passed through the forty-ninth Gate, and never entered the fiftieth. See the Oedipus Aegyptiacus of Athanasius Kircher, vol. ii. p. 319.

First Order: Elementary

1. Chaos, Hyle, The first matter.

2. Formless, void, lifeless.

3. The Abyss.

4. Origin of the Elements.

5. Earth (no seed germs).

6. Water.

7. Air.

8. Fire

9. Differentiation of qualities.

10. Mixture and combination.

Second Order: Decad of Evolution

11. Minerals differentiate.

12. Vegetable principles appear.

13. Seeds germinate in moisture.

14. Herbs and Trees.

15. Fructification in vegetable life.

16. Origin of low forms of animal life.

17. Insects and Reptiles appear.

18. Fishes, vertebrate life in the waters.

19. Birds, vertebrate life in the air.

20. Quadrupeds, vertebrate earth animals.

Third Order: Decad of Humanity

21. Appearance of Man.

22. Material human body.

23. Human Soul conferred.

24. Mystery of Adam and Eve.

25. Complete Man as the Microcosm.
26. Gift of five human faces acting exteriorly.
27. Gift of five powers to the soul.
28. Adam Kadmon, the Heavenly Man.
29. Angelic beings.
30. Man in the image of God.
Fourth Order: World of Spheres
31. The Moon.
32. Mercury.
33. Venus.
34. Sol.
35. Mars.
36. Jupiter.
37. Saturn.
38. The Firmament.
39. The Primum Mobile.
40. The Empyrean Heaven.
Fifth Order: The Angelic World
41. Ishim—Sons of Fire.
42. Auphanim—Cherubim.
43. Aralim—Thrones.
44. Chashmalim—Dominions.
45. Seraphim—Virtues.
46. Malakim—Powers.

47. Elohim—Principalities.

48. Beni Elohim—Angels.

49. Cherubim—Arch-angels.

Sixth Order: The Archetype

50. God. Ain Suph. He Whom no mortal eye hath seen, and Who has been known to Jesus the Messiah alone.

NOTE.—The Angels of the Fifth or Angelic World are arranged in very different order by various Kabalistic Rabbis.

THE THIRTY-TWO PATHS OF WISDOM

Translated from the Hebrew Text of Joannes Stephanus Rittangelius, 1642: which is also to be found in the “Oedipus Aegyptiacus” of Athanasius Kircher, 1653.

(These paragraphs are very obscure in meaning, and the Hebrew text is probably very corrupt.)

The First Path is called the Admirable or the Hidden Intelligence (the Highest Crown): for it is the Light giving the power of comprehension of that First Principle which has no beginning; and it is the Primal Glory, for no created being can attain to its essence.

The Second Path is that of the Illuminating Intelligence: it is the Crown of Creation, the Splendour of the Unity, equalling it, and it is exalted above every head, and named by the Kabalists the Second Glory.

The Third Path is the Sanctifying Intelligence, and is the foundation of Primordial wisdom, which is called the Creator of Faith, and its roots are AMN; and it is the parent of Faith, from which doth Faith emanate.

The Fourth Path is named the Cohesive or Receptacular Intelligence; and is so called because it contains all the holy powers, and from it emanate all the spiritual virtues with the most exalted essences: they emanate one from the other by the power of the Primordial Emanation. The Highest Crown.) (1)

The Fifth Path is called the Radical Intelligence, because it resembles the Unity, uniting itself to the Binah, (2) or Intelligence which emanates from the Primordial depths of Wisdom or Chokmah. (3)

The Sixth Path is called the Mediating Intelligence, because in it are multiplied the influxes of the emanations, for it causes that influence to flow into all the reservoirs of the Blessings, with which these themselves are united.

The Seventh Path is the Occult Intelligence, because it is the Refulgent Splendour of all the Intellectual virtues which are perceived by the eyes of intellect, and by the

contemplation of faith.

The Eighth Path is called the Absolute or Perfect Intelligence, because it is the means of the primordial, which has no root by which it can cleave, nor rest, except in the hidden places of Gedulah, (4) Magnificence, from which emanates its own proper essence.

The Ninth Path is the Pure Intelligence, so called because it purifies the Numerations, it proves and corrects the designing of their representation, and disposes their unity with which they are combined without diminution or division.

The Tenth Path is the Resplendent Intelligence, because it is exalted above every head, and sits on the throne of Binah (the Intelligence spoken of in the Third Path). It illuminates the splendour of all the lights, and causes an influence to emanate from the Prince of countenances. (5)

The Eleventh Path is the Scintillating Intelligence, because it is the essence of that curtain which is placed close to the order of the disposition, and this is a special dignity given to it that it may be able to stand before the Face of the Cause of Causes.

The Twelfth Path is the Intelligence of Transparency, because it is that species of Magnificence called Chazchazit, (6) the place whence issues the vision of those seeing in apparitions. (That is the prophecies by seers in a vision.)

The Thirteenth Path is named the Uniting Intelligence, and is so called because it is itself the Essence of Glory. It is the Consummation of the Truth of individual spiritual things.

The Fourteenth Path is the Illuminating Intelligence and is so called because it is that Chashmal (7) which is the founder of the concealed and fundamental ideas of holiness and of their stages of preparation.

The Fifteenth Path is the Constituting Intelligence, so called because it constitutes the substance of creation in pure darkness, and men have spoken of these contemplations; it is that darkness spoken of in Scripture, Job xxxviii. 9, "and thick darkness a swaddling band for it."

The Sixteenth Path is the Triumphal or Eternal Intelligence, so called because it is the pleasure of the Glory, beyond which is no other Glory like to it, and it is called also the Paradise prepared for the Righteous.

The Seventeenth Path is the Disposing Intelligence, which provides Faith to the Righteous, and they are clothed with the Holy Spirit by it, and it is called the Foundation of Excellence in the state of higher things.

The Eighteenth Path is called the Intelligence or House of Influence (by the greatness of whose abundance the influx of good things upon created beings is increased), and from

its midst the arcana and hidden senses are drawn forth, which dwell in its shade and which cling to it, from the Cause of all causes.

The Nineteenth Path is the Intelligence of the Secret of all the activities of the spiritual beings, and is so called because of the influence diffused by it from the most high and exalted sublime glory.

The Twentieth Path is the Intelligence of Will, and is so called because it is the means of preparation of all and each created being, and by this intelligence the existence of the Primordial Wisdom becomes known.

The Twenty-first Path is the Intelligence of Conciliation and Reward, and is so called because it receives the divine influence which flows into it from its benediction upon all and each existence.

The Twenty-second Path is the Faithful Intelligence, and is so called because by it spiritual virtues are increased, and all dwellers on earth are nearly under its shadow.

The Twenty-third Path is the Stable Intelligence, and it is so called because it has the virtue of consistency among all numerations.

The Twenty-fourth Path is the Imaginative Intelligence, and it is so called because it gives a likeness to all the similitudes which are created in like manner similar to its harmonious elegancies.

The Twenty-fifth Path is the Intelligence of Probation, or Temptation, and is so called because it is the primary temptation, by which the Creator trieth all righteous persons.

The Twenty-sixth Path is called the Renewing Intelligence, because the Holy God renews by it all the changing things which are renewed by the creation of the world.

The Twenty-seventh Path is the Active or Exciting Intelligence, and it is so called because through it every existent being receives its spirit and motion.

The Twenty-eighth Path is called the Natural Intelligence; by it is completed and perfected the nature of all that exists beneath the Sun.

(This Path is omitted by Rittangelius: I presume by inadvertence.)

The Twenty-ninth Path is the Corporeal Intelligence, so called because it forms every body which is formed in all the worlds, and the reproduction of them.

The Thirtieth Path is the Collective Intelligence, and Astrologers deduce from it the judgment of the Stars and celestial signs, and perfect their science, according to the rules of the motions of the stars.

The Thirty-first Path is the Perpetual Intelligence; but why is it so called? Because it

regulates the motions of the Sun and Moon in their proper order, each in an orbit convenient for it.

The Thirty-second Path is the Administrative Intelligence, and it is so called because it directs and associates the motions of the seven planets, directing all of them in their own proper courses.

NOTES TO THE SEPHER YETZIRAH

It is of considerable importance to a clear understanding of this Occult treatise that the whole work be read through before comment is made, so that the general idea of the several chapters may become in the mind one concrete whole. A separate consideration of the several parts should follow this general grasp of the subject, else much confusion may result.

This book may be considered to be an Allegorical Parallel between the Idealism of Numbers and Letters and the various parts of the Universe, and it sheds much light on many mystic forms and ceremonies yet extant, notably upon Freemasonry, the Tarot, and the later Kabbalah, and is a great aid to the comprehension of the Astro-Theosophic schemes of the Rosicrucians. To obtain the full value of this Treatise, it should be studied hand in hand with Hermetic attributions, the "Isiac Tablet," and with a complete set of the designs, symbols and allocation of the Trump cards of the Tarot pack, for which see my translation of The Sanctum Regnum of the Tarot, by Eliphas Levi.

Note that the oldest MSS. copies of the "Sepher Yetzirah" have no vowel points: the latest editions have them. The system of points in writing Hebrew was not perfected until the seventh century, and even then was not in constant use. Ginsburg asserts that the system of vowel pointing was invented by a Rabbi Mocha in Palestine about A.D. 570, who designed it to assist his pupils. But Isaac Myer states that there are undoubted traces of pointing in Hebrew MSS. of the second century. According to A. E. Waite there is no extant Hebrew MSS. with the vowel points older than the tenth century.

The words "Sepher Yetzirah" are written in Hebrew from right to left, SPR YTzYRH, Samech Peh Resh, Yod Tzaddi Yod Resh Heh; modes of transliteration vary with different authors. Yod is variously written in English letters as I, Y, or J, or sometimes le. Tzaddi is properly Tz; but some write Z only, which is misleading because the Hebrew has also a true Z, Zain.

CHAPTER 1

The twelve sections of this chapter introduce this philosophic disquisition upon the Formation and Development of the Universe. Having specified the subdivision of the letters into three classes, the Triad, the Heptad, and the Dodecad, these are put aside for the time; and the Decad mainly considered as specially associated with the idea of Number, and as obviously composed of the Tetrad and the Hexad.

1. Thirty-two. This is the number of the Paths or Ways of Wisdom, which are added as a supplement. 32 is written in Hebrew by LB, Lamed and Beth, and these are the last and first letters of the Pentateuch. The number 32 is obtained thus— $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 32$.

Laib, LB as a Hebrew word, means the Heart of Man.

Paths. The word here is NTIBUT, netibuth; NTIB meant primarily a pathway, or foot-made track; but is here used symbolically in the same sense as the Christian uses the word, way—the way of life: other meanings are—stage, power, form, effect; and later, a doctrinal formula, in Kabalistic writings.

2. Jah. This divine name is found in Psalm lxviii. 4; it is translated into Greek as kurios, and into Latin as dominus, and commonly into the English word, Lord: it is really the first half of the word IHVH or Jehovah, or the Yahveh of modern scholars.

3. Jehovah Tzabaoth. This divine name is printed in English Bibles as Jehovah Sabaoth, or as “Lord of hosts” as in Psalm xxiv. 10. TzBA is an army.

4. God of Israel. Here the word God is ALHI, which in unpointed Hebrew might be God, or Gods, or My God.

5. The Elohim of the Living. The words are ALHIM CHIIM. Alhim, often written in English letters as Elohim, or by Godfrey Higgins as Aleim, seems to be a masculine plural of the feminine form Eloah, ALH, of the divine masculine name EL, AL; this is commonly translated God, and means strong, mighty, supreme. Chiim is the plural of Chi—living, or life. ChIH is a living animal, and so is ChIVA. ChII is also life. Frey in his dictionary gives CHIIM as the plural word lives, or vitae. The true adjective for living is ChIA. Elohim Chiim, then, apart from Jewish or Christian preconception, is “the living Gods,” or “the Gods of the lives, i.e., living ones.” Rittangelius gives Dii viventes, “The living Gods,” both words in the plural. Pistorius omits both words. Postellus, the orthodox, gives Deus Vivus. The Elohim are the Seven Forces, proceeding from the One Divine, which control the “terra viventium,” the manifested world of life.

6. God. In this case we have the simple form AL, EL.

7. Sepharim. SPRIM, the plural masculine of SPR, commonly translated book or letter: the meaning here is plainly “forms of expression.”

8. Numbers, Letters and Sounds. The three Hebrew words here given are, in unpointed Hebrew, SPR, SPR and SIPUR. Some late editors, to cover the difficulty of this passage, have given SPR, SPUR, SIPR, pointing them to read Separ, Seepur, Saypar.

The sense of the whole volume appears to need their translation as Numbers, Letters and Sounds. Pistorius gave “Scriptis, numeratis, pronunciatis.” Postellus gave “Numerans, numerus, numeratus,” thus losing the contrasted meanings; and so did Rittangelius, who gave “Numero, numerante, numerato.”

9. The Ineffable Sephiroth. The words are SPIRUT BLIMH, Sephiruth Belimah. The simplest translation is “the voices from nothing.” The Ten Sephiruth of the Kabbalah are the “Ten Primary Emanations from the Divine Source,” which are the primal forces leading to all manifestation upon every plane in succession. Buxtorf gives for

Sephiruth—predicationes logicae. The word seems to me clearly allied to the Latin spiritus—spirit, soul, wind; and is used by Quintilian as a sound, or noise. The meaning of Belimah is more doubtful. Rittangelius always gives “praeter illud ineffabile.” Pistorius gives “praeter ineffabile.” Postellus evades the difficulty and simply puts the word Belimah into his Latin translation. In Frey's Hebrew Dictionary BLIMH is translated as nothing, without any other suggestion; BLI is “not,” MR is “anything.” In Kabalistic writings the Sephiruth, the Divine Voices and Powers, are called “ineffabilis,” not to be spoken of, from their sacred nature.

10. The classification of the Hebrew letters into a Triad, Heptad and Dodecad, runs through the whole philosophy of the Kabbalah. Many ancient authors added intentional blinds, such as forming the Triad of A.M.T., Ameth, truth; and of AMN, Amen.

11. The Two Covenants, by the Word or Spirit, and by the Flesh, made by Jehovah with Abraham, Genesis xvii. The Covenant of Circumcision was to be an outward and visible sign of the Divine promise made to Abraham and his offspring. The Hebrew word for circumcision is Mulaḥ, MULH: note that MLH is also synonymous with DBR, dabar,—verbum or word.

12. Rittangelius gives “replace the formative power upon his throne.” Postellus gives restore the device to its place.”

13. Abyss; the word is OUMQ for OMQ, a depth, vastness, or valley.

14. My Hermetic rituals explained this Yetziratic attribution.

15. The Lord the only God. The words are ADUN IChID AL, or “Adonai (as commonly written) the only El.”

16. Seat. The word is MOUN, dwelling, habitation, or throne.

17. Lightning flash. In the early edition the words “like scintillating flame” are used: the Hebrew word is BRQ. Many Kabbalists have shown how the Ten Sephiroth are symbolised by the zig-zag lightning flash.

18. God; the Divine name here is Jehovah.

19. The text gives only RTzUAV ShUB—“currendo et redeundo,” but the commentators have generally considered this to be a quotation from Ezekiel i. 14, referred to H ChIVT, the living creatures, kerubic forms.

20. The Spirit of the Gods of the Living. RUCH ALHIM ChIIM; or as R. gives it, “spiritus Deorum Viventium.” Orthodoxy would translate these words “The spirit of the living God.”

21. AL ChI H OULMIM; “the Living God of Ages”; here the word God really is in the singular.

22. The Voice, Spirit and Word are QUL, RUCh, DBR. A very notable Hebrew expression of Divinatory intuition was BATH QUL, the Daughter of the Voice.

23. Formless and Void. THU and BHU; these two words occur in Genesis i. 2, and are translated “waste and void.”

24. Note the order in which the primordial elements were produced. First, Spirit (query Akasa, Ether); then Air, Vayu; then Water, Apas, which condenses into solid elementary Earth, Prithivi; and lastly from the Water He formed Fire.

25. The first name is often written Ophanim, the letters are AUPNIM; in the Vision of Ezekiel i. 16, the word occurs and is translated “Wheels.” ShRPIM are the mysterious beings of Isaiah vi. 2; the word otherwise is translated Serpent, and in Numbers xxi. 6, as “fiery serpents”: also in verse 8 as “fiery serpent” when Jehovah said “Make thee a fiery serpent and set it upon a pole.” Kerubim. The Hebrew words are ChIVTh H QDSh, holy animals: I have ventured to put Kerubim, as the title of the other Biblical form of Holy mysterious animal, as given in 1 Kings vi. 23 and Exodus xxv. 18, and indeed Genesis iii. 24. Bible dictionaries generally give the word as Cherubim, but in Hebrew the initial letter is always K and not Ch.

26. Three. In the first edition I overlooked this word three; and putting and for as, made four classes of serving beings.

27. This is verse 4 of Psalm civ.

28. Here follow the permutations of the name IHV, which is the Tetragrammaton—Jehovah, without the second or final Heh: IHV is a Tri-grammaton, and is more suitable to the third or Yetziratic plane. HVI is the imperative form of the verb to be, meaning be thou; HIV is the infinitive; and VIH is future. In IHV note that Yod corresponds to the Father; Heh to Binah, the Supernal Mother; and Vau to the Microprosopus—Son.

29. Note the subdivision of the Decad into the Tetrad—four elements; and the Hexad—six dimensions of space.

CHAPTER 2

This chapter consists of philosophic remarks on the twenty-two sounds and letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and hence connected with the air by speech, and it points out the uses of those letters to form words—the signs of ideas, and the symbols of material substances.

30. Soul; the word is NPSH, which is commonly translated soul, meaning the living personality of man, animal or existing thing: it corresponds almost to the Theosophic Prana plus the stimulus of Kama.

31. This is the modern classification of the letters into guttural, palatal, lingual, dental

and labial sounds.

32. The 231 Gates. The number 242 is obtained by adding together all the numbers from 1 to 22. The Hebrew letters can be placed in pairs in 242 different positions: thus ab, ag, ad, up to at; then ba, bb, bg, bd, up to bt, and so on to ts, tt: this is in direct order only, without reversal. For the reason why eleven are deducted, and the number 231 specified, see the Table and Note 15 in the edition of Postellus.

33. Non-existent; the word is AIN, nothingness. Ain precedes Ain Suph, boundlessness; and Ain Suph Aur, Boundless Light.

34. Body; the word is GUP, usually applied to the animal material body, but here means "one whole."

CHAPTER 3

This chapter is especially concerned with the essence of the Triad, as represented by the Three Mothers, Aleph, Mem, and Shin. Their development in three directions is pointed out, namely in the Macrocosm or Universe; in the Year or in Time; and in the Microcosm or Man.

35. The importance of equilibrium is constantly reiterated in the Kabbalah. The "Siphra Dtzeniouta," or "Book of Mystery," opens with a reference to this Equilibrium as a fundamental necessity of stable existence.

36. Heavens. The Hebrew word Heshamaim HShMIM, has in it the element of Aesh, fire, and Mim, water; and also Shem, name; The Name is IHVH, attributed to the elements. ShMA is in Chaldee a name for the Trinity (Parkhurst). ShMSh is the Sun, and Light, and a type of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. Malachi iv. 2.

37. Were produced. The Hebrew word BRA, is the root. Three Hebrew words are used in the Bible to represent the idea of making, producing or creating.

BRIAH, BriaH, giving shape, Genesis i. 1.

OShIH, Ashiah, completing, Genesis i. 31.

ITzIRH, Yetzirah, forming, Genesis ii. 7.

To these the Kabbalists add the word ATzLH, with the meaning of "producing something manifest from the unmanifested."

^ Emanation ^ Shin ^ Aleph ^ Mem ^ | Macrocosm | Primal Fire | Spirit | Primal Water | | Universe | Heavens | Atmosphere | The Earth | | Elements | Terrestrial Fire | Air | Water | | Man | Head | Chest | Belly | | Year | Heat | Temperate | Cold |

CHAPTER 4

This is the special chapter of the Heptad, the powers and properties of the Seven. Here

again we have the threefold attribution of the numbers and letters to the Universe, to the Year, and to Man. The supplemental paragraphs have been printed in modern form by Kalisch; they identify the several letters of the Heptad more definitely with the planets, days of the week, human attributes and organs of the senses.

39. These numbers have been a source of difference between the editors and copyists, hardly any two editors concurring. I have given the numbers arising from continual multiplication of the product by each succeeding unit from one to seven. $2 \times 1 = 2$, $2 \times 3 = 6$, $6 \times 4 = 24$, $24 \times 5 = 120$, $120 \times 6 = 720$, $720 \times 7 = 5040$.

40. In associating the particular letters to each planet the learned Jesuit Athanasius Kircher allots Beth to the Sun, Gimel to Venus, Daleth to Mercury, Kaph to Luna, Peh to Saturn, Resh to Jupiter, and Tau to Mars. Kalisch in the supplementary paragraphs gives a different attribution; both are wrong, according to clairvoyant investigation. Consult the Tarot symbolism given by Court de Gebelin, Eliphas Levi, and my notes to the Isiaic Tablet of Bembo. The true attribution is probably not anywhere printed. The planet names here given are Chaldee words.

41. The Seven Heavens and the Seven Earths are printed with errors, and I believe intentional mistakes, in many occult ancient books. Some Hermetic MSS. have the correct names and spelling.

42. On the further attribution of these Seven letters, note that Postellus gives: Vita—mors, Pax—afflictio, Sapientia—stultitia, Divitiae (Opus)—paupertas, Gratia—opprobrium, Proles—sterilitas, Imperium—servitus. Pistorius gives: Vita—mors, Pax—bellum, Scientia—ignorantia, Divitiae—paupertas, Gratia—abominatio, Semen (Proles)—sterilitas, Imperium (Dominatio)—servitus.

CHAPTER 5

This chapter is specially concerned with the Dodecad; the number twelve is itself pointed out, and the characters of its component units, once more in the three zones of the universe, year and man; the last paragraph gives a recapitulation of the whole number of letters: the Supplement gives a form of allotment of the several letters.

43. It is necessary to avoid confusion between these letters; different authors translate them in different manners. Heh or Hé not be confused with Cheth, or Heth, Ch. Teth, Th also must be kept distinct from the final letter Tau, T, which is one of the double letters; the semi-English pronunciation of these two letters is much confused, each is at times both t and th; Yod is either I, Y, or J; Samech is simple S, and must not be confused with Shin, Sh, one of the mother letters; Oin is often written in English Hebrew grammars as Ayin, and Sometimes as Gnain; Tzaddi must not be confused with Zain, Z; and lastly Qoph, Q, is very often replaced by K, which is hardly defensible as there is a true K in addition.

44. Postellus gives suspicion and Pistorius, mind.

45. These letters are the initials of the 12 Zodiacal signs in Hebrew nomenclature. They

are:

| Teth | Telah | Aries | Mem | Maznim | Libra | | Shin | Shor | Taurus | Oin | Oqereb |
Scorpio | | Tau | Thaumim | Gemini | Qoph | Qesheth | Sagittarius | | Samech | Sarta |
Cancer | Gimel | Gedi | Capricorn | | Aleph | Aryeh | Leo | Daleth | Dali | Aquarius | | Beth
| Bethuleh | Virgo | Daleth | Dagim | Pisces |

46. The month Nisan begins about March 29th. Yiar is also written Iyar, and Aiar: the Hebrew letters are AIIR.

47. The list of organs varies. All agree in two hands, two feet, two kidneys, liver, gall and spleen. Postellus then gives, intestina, vesica, arteriae," the intestines, bladder, and arteries; Rittangelius gives the same. Pistorius gives, "colon, coagulum (spleen) et ventriculus," colon—the large intestine, coagulum and stomach. The chief difficulty is with the Hebrew word MSS, which is allied to two different roots, one meaning private, concealed, hidden; and the other meaning liquefied.

48. The Elohim—Divine powers—not IHVH the Tetragrammaton.
CHAPTER 6

This chapter is a resumé of the preceding five; it calls the universe and mankind to witness to the truth of the scheme of distribution of the powers of the numbers among created forms, and concludes with the narration that this philosophy was revealed by the Divine to Abraham, who received and faithfully accepted it, as a form of Wisdom under a Covenant.

49. The Dragon, TLI, Theli. The Hebrew letters amount in numeration to 440, that is 400, 30 and 10. The best opinion is that Tali or Theli refers to the 12 Zodiacal constellations along the great circle of the Ecliptic; where it ends there it begins again, and so the ancient occultists drew the Dragon with its tail in its mouth. Some have thought that Tali referred to the constellation Draco, which meanders across the Northern polar sky; others have referred it to the Milky Way; others to an imaginary line joining Caput to Cauda Draconis, the upper and lower nodes of the Moon. Adolphe Franck says that Theli is an Arabic word.

50. Happiness, or a good end, or simply good, TUBH.

51. Misery, or an evil end, or simply evil, ROH.

52. This Hebrew version omits the allotment of the remaining six. Mayer gives the paragraph thus:—The triad of amity is the heart and the two ears; the triad of enmity is the liver, gall, and the tongue; the three life-givers are the two nostrils and the spleen; the three death-dealing ones are the mouth and the two lower openings of the body.

53. God. In this case the name is AL, EL.

54. This last paragraph is generally considered to be less ancient than the remainder of

the treatise, and by another author.

55. The Lord most high. OLIU ADUN. Adun or Adon, or Adonai, ADNI, are commonly translated Lord; Eliun, OLIUN, is the more usual form of “the most high one.”

56. Him. Rittangelius gives “credidit in Tetragrammaton,” but this word is not in the Hebrew.

57. Tongue. The verbal covenant.

58. Speech. The Hebrew has “upon his tongue.”

59. The Hebrew version of Rabbi Judah Ha Levi concludes with the phrase, “and said of him, Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee.” Rabbi Luria gives the Hebrew version which I have translated. Postellus gives: “He drew him into the water, He rose up in spirit, He inflamed him in seven suitable forms with twelve signs.” Mayer gives: “Er zog sie mit Wasser, zundet sie an mit Feuer; erregte sie mit Geist; verbannte sie mit sieben, goss sie aus mit den zwölf Gestirnen.” “He drew them with water, He kindled them with fire, He moved them with spirit, distributed them with seven, and sent them forth with twelve.

Notes to the Thirty-Two Paths of Wisdom

1. The Highest Crown is Kether, the First Sephira, the first emanation from the Ain Suph Aur, the Limit-less Light.

2. Binah, or Understanding, is the Third Sephira.

3. Chokmah, Wisdom, is the Second Sephira.

4. Gedulah is a synonym of Chesed, Mercy, the Fourth Sephira.

5. Metatron, the Intelligence of the First Sephira, and the reputed guide of Moses.

6. This word is from ChZCh, a seer, seership. Chazuth is a vision.

7. This word means “scintillating flame.”

The “Thirty-two Paths of Wisdom” refer to the Ten Sephiroth and the Twenty-two letters, each supplying a type of divine power and attributes. In my Introduction to the Kabbalah will be found a diagram showing how the Paths from Eleven to Thirty-two connect the several Sephiroth, and are deemed to transmit the divine influence. Some teachers of Occult Science also allot the Twenty-two Trumps of the Tarot Cards to the twenty-two Paths.

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An Introduction to the Corpus Hermeticum

An Introduction to the Corpus Hermeticum
by John Michael Greer

The fifteen tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, along with the Perfect Sermon or Asclepius, are the foundation documents of the Hermetic tradition. Written by unknown authors in Egypt sometime before the end of the third century C.E., they were part of a once substantial literature attributed to the mythic figure of Hermes Trismegistus, a Hellenistic fusion of the Greek god Hermes and the Egyptian god Thoth.

This literature came out of the same religious and philosophical ferment that produced Neoplatonism, Christianity, and the diverse collection of teachings usually lumped together under the label "Gnosticism": a ferment which had its roots in the impact of Platonic thought on the older traditions of the Hellenized East. There are obvious connections and common themes linking each of these traditions, although each had its own answer to the major questions of the time.

The treatises we now call the Corpus Hermeticum were collected into a single volume in Byzantine times, and a copy of this volume survived to come into the hands of Lorenzo de Medici's agents in the fifteenth century. Marsilio Ficino, the head of the Florentine Academy, was pulled off the task of translating the dialogues of Plato in order to put the Corpus Hermeticum into Latin first. His translation saw print in 1463, and was reprinted at least twenty-two times over the next century and a half.

The treatises divide up into several groups. The first (CH I), the "Poemandres", is the account of a revelation given to Hermes Trismegistus by the being Poemandres or "Man-Shepherd", an expression of the universal Mind. The next eight (CH II-IX), the "General Sermons", are short dialogues or lectures discussing various basic points of Hermetic philosophy. There follows the "Key" (CH X), a summary of the General Sermons, and after this a set of four tractates - "Mind unto Hermes", "About the Common Mind", "The Secret Sermon on the Mountain", and the "Letter of Hermes to Asclepius" (CH XI-XIV) - touching on the more mystical aspects of Hermeticism. The collection is rounded off by the "Definitions of Asclepius unto King Ammon" (CH XV), which may be composed of three fragments of longer works.

The Perfect Sermon

The Perfect Sermon or Asclepius, which is also included here, reached the

Renaissance by a different route. It was translated into Latin in ancient times, reputedly by the same Lucius Apuleius of Madaura whose comic-serious masterpiece *The Golden Ass* provides some of the best surviving evidence on the worship of Isis in the Roman world. Augustine of Hippo quotes from the old Latin translation at length in his *City of God*, and copies remained in circulation in medieval Europe all the way up to the Renaissance. The original Greek version was lost, although quotations survive in several ancient sources.

The Perfect Sermon is substantially longer than any other surviving work of ancient Hermetic philosophy. It covers topics which also occur in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, but touches on several other issues as well - among them magical processes for the manufacture of gods and a long and gloomy prophecy of the decline of Hermetic wisdom and the end of the world.

The Significance of the Hermetic Writings

The *Corpus Hermeticum* landed like a well-aimed bomb amid the philosophical systems of late medieval Europe. Quotations from the Hermetic literature in the Church Fathers (who were never shy of leaning on pagan sources to prove a point) accepted a traditional chronology which dated "Hermes Trismegistus," as a historical figure, to the time of Moses. As a result, the Hermetic tractates' borrowings from Jewish scripture and Platonic philosophy were seen, in the Renaissance, as evidence that the *Corpus Hermeticum* had anticipated and influenced both. The Hermetic philosophy was seen as a primordial wisdom tradition, identified with the "Wisdom of the Egyptians" mentioned in Exodus and lauded in Platonic dialogues such as the *Timaeus*. It thus served as a useful club in the hands of intellectual rebels who sought to break the stranglehold of Aristotelian scholasticism on the universities at this time.

It also provided one of the most important weapons to another major rebellion of the age - the attempt to reestablish magic as a socially acceptable spiritual path in the Christian West. Another body of literature attributed to Hermes Trismegistus was made up of astrological, alchemical and magical texts. If, as the scholars of the Renaissance believed, Hermes was a historical person who had written all these things, and if Church Fathers had quoted his philosophical works with approval, and if those same works could be shown to be wholly in keeping with some definitions of Christianity, then the whole structure of magical Hermeticism could be given a second-hand legitimacy in a Christian context.

This didn't work, of course; the radical redefinition of Western Christianity that took place in the Reformation and Counter-Reformation hardened doctrinal barriers to the point that people were being burned in the sixteenth century for practices that were considered evidences of devoutness in the fourteenth. The attempt, though, made the language and concepts of the Hermetic tractates central to much of post-medieval magic in the West.

The Translation

The translation of the Corpus Hermeticum and Perfect Sermon given here is that of G.R.S. Mead (1863-1933), originally published as Vol. 2 of his *Thrice Greatest Hermes* (London, 1906). Mead was a close associate of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the founder and moving spirit of the Theosophical Society, and most of his considerable scholarly output was brought out under Theosophical auspices. The result, predictably, was that most of that output has effectively been blacklisted in academic circles ever since.

This is unfortunate, for Mead's translations of the Hermetic literature were until quite recently the best available in English. (They are still the best in the public domain; thus their use here.) The Everard translation of 1650, which is still in print, reflects the state of scholarship at the time it was made - which is only a criticism because a few things have been learned since then! The Walter Scott translation - despite the cover blurb on the recent Shambhala reprint, this is not the Sir Walter Scott of *Ivanhoe* fame - while more recent than Mead's, is a product of the "New Criticism" of the first half of this century, and garbles the text severely; scholars of Hermeticism of the caliber of Dame Frances Yates have labeled the Scott translation worthless. By contrast, a comparison of Mead's version to the excellent modern translation by Brian Copenhaver, or to the translations of CH I (Poemandres) and VII (The Greatest Ill Among Men is Ignorance of God) given in Bentley Layton's *The Gnostic Scriptures*, shows Mead as a capable translator, with a usually solid grasp of the meaning of these sometimes obscure texts.

There is admittedly one problem with Mead's translation: the aesthetics of the English text. Mead hoped, as he mentioned at the beginning of *Thrice Greatest Hermes*, to "render...these beautiful theosophic treatises into an English that might, perhaps, be thought in some small way worthy of the Greek originals." Unfortunately for this ambition, he was writing at a time when the last remnants of the florid and pompous Victorian style were fighting it out with the more straightforward colloquial prose that became the style of the new century. Caught in this tangle like so many writers of the time, Mead wanted to write in the grand style but apparently didn't know how. The result is a sometimes bizarre mishmash in which turn-of-the-century slang stands cheek by jowl with overblown phrases in King James Bible diction, and in which mishandled archaisms, inverted word order, and poetic contractions render the text less than graceful - and occasionally less than readable. Seen from a late twentieth century sensibility, the result verges on unintentional self-parody in places: for example, where Mead uses the Scots contraction "ta'en" (for "taken"), apparently for sheer poetic color, calling up an image of Hermes Trismegistus in kilt and sporran.

The "poetic" word order is probably the most serious barrier to readability; it's a good rule, whenever the translation seems to descend into gibberish, to try shuffling the words of the sentence in question. It may also be worth noting that Mead consistently uses "for that" in place of "because" and "aught" in place of "any", and leaves out the word "the" more or less at random.

Finally, comments in (parentheses) and in [square brackets] are in Mead's original; those in <angle brackets> are my own additions.

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I. Poemandres, the Shepherd of Men

The Corpus Hermeticum

translated by G.R.S. Mead

I. Poemandres, the Shepherd of Men

<This is the most famous of the Hermetic documents, a revelation account describing a

vision of the creation of the universe and the nature and fate of humanity. Authors from the Renaissance onward have been struck by the way in which its creation myth seems partly inspired by Genesis, partly reacting against it. The Fall has here become the descent of the Primal Man through the spheres of the planets to the world of Nature, a descent caused not by disobedience but by love, and done with the blessing of God.

<The seven rulers of fate discussed in sections 9, 14 and 25 are the archons of the seven planets, which also appear in Plato's Timaeus and in a number of the ancient writings usually lumped together as "Gnostic". Their role here is an oddly ambivalent one, powers of Harmony who are nonetheless the sources of humanity's tendencies to evil. - JMG>

1. It chanced once on a time my mind was meditating on the things that are, my thought was raised to a great height, the senses of my body being held back - just as men who are weighed down with sleep after a fill of food, or from fatigue of body.

Methought a Being more than vast, in size beyond all bounds, called out my name and saith: What wouldst thou hear and see, and what hast thou in mind to learn and know?

2. And I do say: Who art thou?

He saith: I am Man-Shepherd (Poemandres), Mind of all-masterhood; I know what thou desirest and I'm with thee everywhere.

3. [And] I reply: I long to learn the things that are, and comprehend their nature, and know God. This is, I said, what I desire to hear.

He answered back to me: Hold in thy mind all thou wouldst know, and I will teach thee.

4. E'en with these words His aspect changed, and straightway, in the twinkling of an eye, all things were opened to me, and I see a Vision limitless, all things turned into Light - sweet, joyous [Light]. And I became transported as I gazed.

But in a little while Darkness came settling down on part [of it], awesome and gloomy, coiling in sinuous folds, so that methought it like unto a snake.

And then the Darkness changed into some sort of a Moist Nature, tossed about beyond all power of words, belching out smoke as from a fire, and groaning forth a wailing sound that beggars all description.

[And] after that an outcry inarticulate came forth from it, as though it were a Voice of Fire.

5. [Thereon] out of the Light [...] a Holy Word (Logos) descended on that Nature. And upwards to the height from the Moist Nature leaped forth pure Fire; light was it, swift and active too.

The Air, too, being light, followed after the Fire; from out of the Earth-and-Water rising up to Fire so that it seemed to hang therefrom.

But Earth-and-Water stayed so mingled with each other, that Earth from Water no one could discern. Yet were they moved to hear by reason of the Spirit-Word (Logos) pervading them.

6. Then saith to me Man-Shepherd: Didst understand this Vision what it means?

Nay; that shall I know, said I.

That Light, He said, am I, thy God, Mind, prior to Moist Nature which appeared from Darkness; the Light-Word (Logos) [that appeared] from Mind is Son of God.

What then? - say I.

Know that what sees in thee and hears is the Lord's Word (Logos); but Mind is Father-God. Not separate are they the one from other; just in their union [rather] is it Life consists.

Thanks be to Thee, I said.

So, understand the Light [He answered], and make friends with it.

7. And speaking thus He gazed for long into my eyes, so that I trembled at the look of him.

But when He raised His head, I see in Mind the Light, [but] now in Powers no man could number, and Cosmos grown beyond all bounds, and that the Fire was compassed round about by a most mighty Power, and [now] subdued had come unto a stand.

And when I saw these things I understood by reason of Man-Shepherd's Word (Logos).

8. But as I was in great astonishment, He saith to me again: Thou didst behold in Mind the Archetypal Form whose being is before beginning without end. Thus spake to me Man-Shepherd.

And I say: Whence then have Nature's elements their being?

To this He answer gives: From Will of God. [Nature] received the Word (Logos), and gazing upon the Cosmos Beautiful did copy it, making herself into a cosmos, by means of her own elements and by the births of souls.

9. And God-the-Mind, being male and female both, as Light and Life subsisting, brought forth another Mind to give things form, who, God as he was of Fire and Spirit, formed Seven Rulers who enclose the cosmos that the sense perceives. Men call their ruling Fate.

10. Straightway from out the downward elements God's Reason (Logos) leaped up to Nature's pure formation, and was at-oned with the Formative Mind; for it was co-essential with it. And Nature's downward elements were thus left reason-less, so as to be pure matter.

11. Then the Formative Mind ([at-oned] with Reason), he who surrounds the spheres and spins them with his whorl, set turning his formations, and let them turn from a beginning boundless unto an endless end. For that the circulation of these [spheres] begins where it doth end, as Mind doth will.

And from the downward elements Nature brought forth lives reason-less; for He did not extend the Reason (Logos) [to them]. The Air brought forth things winged; the Water things that swim, and Earth-and-Water one from another parted, as Mind willed. And from her bosom Earth produced what lives she had, four-footed things and reptiles, beasts wild and tame.

12. But All-Father Mind, being Life and Light, did bring forth Man co-equal to Himself, with whom He fell in love, as being His own child; for he was beautiful beyond compare, the Image of his Sire. In very truth, God fell in love with his own Form; and on him did bestow all of His own formations.

13. And when he gazed upon what the Enformer had created in the Father, [Man] too wished to enform; and [so] assent was given him by the Father.

Changing his state to the formative sphere, in that he was to have his whole authority, he gazed upon his Brother's creatures. They fell in love with him, and gave him each a share of his own ordering.

And after that he had well learned their essence and had become a sharer in their nature, he had a mind to break right through the Boundary of their spheres, and to subdue the might of that which pressed upon the Fire.

14. So he who hath the whole authority o'er [all] the mortals in the cosmos and o'er its lives irrational, bent his face downwards through the Harmony, breaking right through its strength, and showed to downward Nature God's fair form.

And when she saw that Form of beauty which can never satiate, and him who [now] possessed within himself each single energy of [all seven] Rulers as well as God's own Form, she smiled with love; for 'twas as though she'd seen the image of Man's fairest form upon her Water, his shadow on her Earth.

He in turn beholding the form like to himself, existing in her, in her Water, loved it and willed to live in it; and with the will came act, and [so] he vivified the form devoid of reason.

And Nature took the object of her love and wound herself completely around him, and

they were intermingled, for they were lovers.

15. And this is why beyond all creatures on the earth man is twofold; mortal because of body, but because of the essential man immortal.

Though deathless and possessed of sway o'er all, yet doth he suffer as a mortal doth, subject to Fate.

Thus though above the Harmony, within the Harmony he hath become a slave. Though male-female, as from a Father male-female, and though he's sleepless from a sleepless [Sire], yet is he overcome [by sleep].

16. Thereon [I say: Teach on], O Mind of me, for I myself as well am amorous of the Word (Logos).

The Shepherd said: This is the mystery kept hid until this day.

Nature embraced by Man brought forth a wonder, oh so wonderful. For as he had the nature of the Concord of the Seven, who, as I said to thee, [were made] of Fire and Spirit - Nature delayed not, but immediately brought forth seven "men", in correspondence with the natures of the Seven, male-female and moving in the air.

Thereon [I said]: O Shepherd, ..., for now I'm filled with great desire and long to hear; do not run off.

The Shepherd said: Keep silence, for not as yet have I unrolled for thee the first discourse (logoi).

Lo! I am still, I said.

17. In such wise than, as I have said, the generation of these seven came to pass. Earth was as woman, her Water filled with longing; ripeness she took from Fire, spirit from Aether. Nature thus brought forth frames to suit the form of Man.

And Man from Light and Life changed into soul and mind - from Life to soul, from Light to mind.

And thus continued all the sense-world's parts until the period of their end and new beginnings.

18. Now listen to the rest of the discourse (Logos) which thou dost long to hear.

The period being ended, the bond that bound them all was loosened by God's Will. For all the animals being male-female, at the same time with Man were loosed apart; some became partly male, some in like fashion [partly] female. And straightway God spake by His Holy Word (Logos):

“Increase ye in increasing, and multiply in multitude, ye creatures and creations all; and man that hath Mind in him, let him learn to know that he himself is deathless, and that the cause of death is love, though Love is all.”

19. When He said this, His Forethought did by means of Fate and Harmony effect their couplings and their generations founded. And so all things were multiplied according to their kind.

And he who thus hath learned to know himself, hath reached that Good which doth transcend abundance; but he who through a love that leads astray, expends his love upon his body - he stays in Darkness wandering, and suffering through his senses things of Death.

20. What is the so great fault, said I, the ignorant commit, that they should be deprived of deathlessness?

Thou seem'st, He said, O thou, not to have given heed to what thou heardest. Did I not bid thee think?

Yea do I think, and I remember, and therefore give Thee thanks.

If thou didst think [thereon], [said He], tell me: Why do they merit death who are in Death?

It is because the gloomy Darkness is the root and base of the material frame; from it came the Moist Nature; from this the body in the sense-world was composed; and from this [body] Death doth the Water drain.

21. Right was thy thought, O thou! But how doth “he who knows himself, go unto Him”, as God's Word (Logos) hath declared?

And I reply: the Father of the universals doth consist of Light and Life, from Him Man was born.

Thou sayest well, [thus] speaking. Light and Life is Father-God, and from Him Man was born.

If then thou learnest that thou art thyself of Life and Light, and that thou [happen'st] to be out of them, thou shalt return again to Life. Thus did Man-Shepherd speak.

But tell me further, Mind of me, I cried, how shall I come to Life again...for God doth say: “The man who hath Mind in him, let him learn to know that he himself [is deathless].”

22. Have not all men then Mind?

Thou sayest well, O thou, thus speaking. I, Mind, myself am present with holy men and

good, the pure and merciful, men who live piously.

[To such] my presence doth become an aid, and straightway they gain gnosis of all things, and win the Father's love by their pure lives, and give Him thanks, invoking on Him blessings, and chanting hymns, intent on Him with ardent love.

And ere they give up the body unto its proper death, they turn them with disgust from its sensations, from knowledge of what things they operate. Nay, it is I, the Mind, that will not let the operations which befall the body, work to their [natural] end. For being door-keeper I'll close up [all] the entrances, and cut the mental actions off which base and evil energies induce.

23. But to the Mind-less ones, the wicked and depraved, the envious and covetous, and those who mured do and love impiety, I am far off, yielding my place to the Avenging Daimon, who sharpening the fire, tormenteth him and addeth fire to fire upon him, and rusheth upon him through his senses, thus rendering him readier for transgressions of the law, so that he meets with greater torment; nor doth he ever cease to have desire for appetites inordinate, insatiately striving in the dark.

24. Well hast thou taught me all, as I desired, O Mind. And now, pray, tell me further of the nature of the Way Above as now it is [for me].

To this Man-Shepherd said: When the material body is to be dissolved, first thou surrenderest the body by itself unto the work of change, and thus the form thou hadst doth vanish, and thou surrenderest thy way of life, void of its energy, unto the Daimon. The body's senses next pass back into their sources, becoming separate, and resurrect as energies; and passion and desire withdraw unto that nature which is void of reason.

25. And thus it is that man doth speed his way thereafter upwards through the Harmony.

To the first zone he gives the Energy of Growth and Waning; unto the second [zone], Device of Evils [now] de-energized; unto the third, the Guile of the Desires de-energized; unto the fourth, his Domineering Arrogance, [also] de-energized; unto the fifth, unholy Daring and the Rashness of Audacity, de-energized; unto the sixth, Striving for Wealth by evil means, deprived of its aggrandizement; and to the seventh zone, Ensnaring Falsehood, de-energized.

26. And then, with all the energisings of the harmony stript from him, clothed in his proper Power, he cometh to that Nature which belongs unto the Eighth, and there with those-that-are hymneth the Father.

They who are there welcome his coming there with joy; and he, made like to them that sojourn there, doth further hear the Powers who are above the Nature that belongs unto the Eighth, singing their songs of praise to God in language of their own.

And then they, in a band, go to the Father home; of their own selves they make surrender of themselves to Powers, and [thus] becoming Powers they are in God. This

the good end for those who have gained Gnosis - to be made one with God.

Why shouldst thou then delay? Must it not be, since thou hast all received, that thou shouldst to the worthy point the way, in order that through thee the race of mortal kind may by [thy] God be saved?

27. This when He'd said, Man-Shepherd mingled with the Powers.

But I, with thanks and belssings unto the Father of the universal [Powers], was freed, full of the power he had poured into me, and full of what He'd taught me of the nature of the All and of the loftiest Vision.

And I began to preach unto men the Beauty of Devotion and of Gnosis:

O ye people, earth-born folk, ye who have given yourselves to drunkenness and sleep and ignorance of God, be sober now, cease from your surfeit, cease to be glamourous by irrational sleep!

28. And when they heard, they came with one accord. Whereon I say:

Ye earth-born folk, why have ye given yourselves up to Death, while yet ye have the power of sharing Deathlessness? Repent, O ye, who walk with Error arm in arm and make of Ignorance the sharer of your board; get ye out from the light of Darkness, and take your part in Deathlessness, forsake Destruction!

29. And some of them with jests upon their lips departed [from me], abandoning themselves unto the Way of Death; others entreated to be taught, casting themselves before my feet.

But I made them arise, and I became a leader of the Race towards home, teaching the words (logoi), how and in what way they shall be saved. I sowed in them the words (logoi) of wisdom; of Deathless Water were they given to drink.

And when even was come and all sun's beams began to set, I bade them all give thanks to God. And when they had brought to an end the giving of their thanks, each man returned to his own resting place.

30. But I recorded in my heart Man-Shepherd's benefaction, and with my every hope fulfilled more than rejoiced. For body's sleep became the soul's awakening, and closing of the eyes - true vision, pregnant with Good my silence, and the utterance of my word (logos) begetting of good things.

All this befell me from my Mind, that is Man-Shepherd, Word (Logos) of all masterhood, by whom being God-inspired I came unto the Plain of Truth. Wherefore with all my soul and strength thanksgiving give I unto Father-God.

31. Holy art Thou, O God, the universals' Father.

Holy art Thou, O God, whose Will perfects itself by means of its own Powers.

Holy art Thou, O God, who willeth to be known and art known by Thine own.

Holy art Thou, who didst by Word (Logos) make to consist the things that are.

Holy art Thou, of whom All-nature hath been made an image.

Holy art Thou, whose Form Nature hath never made.

Holy art Thou, more powerful than all power.

Holy art Thou, transcending all pre-eminence.

Holy Thou art, Thou better than all praise.

Accept my reason's offerings pure, from soul and heart for aye stretched up to Thee, O Thou unutterable, unspeakable, Whose Name naught but the Silence can express.

32. Give ear to me who pray that I may ne'er of Gnosis fail, [Gnosis] which is our common being's nature; and fill me with Thy Power, and with this Grace [of Thine], that I may give the Light to those in ignorance of the Race, my Brethren, and Thy Sons.

For this cause I believe, and I bear witness; I go to Life and Light. Blessed art Thou, O Father. Thy Man would holy be as Thou art holy, e'en as Thou gave him Thy full authority [to be].

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II. To Asclepius

II. To Asclepius

translated by G.R.S. Mead

This dialogue sets forth the difference between the physical and metaphysical worlds in the context of Greek natural philosophy. Some of the language is fairly technical: the “errant spheres” of sections 6 and 7 are the celestial spheres carrying the planets, while the “inerrant sphere” is that of the fixed stars.

It's useful to keep in mind, also, that “air” and “spirit” are interchangeable concepts in Greek thought, and that the concept of the Good has a range of implications which don't come across in the English word: one is that the good of any being, in Greek thought, was also that being's necessary goal.

The criticism of childlessness in section 17 should probably be read as a response to the Christian ideal of celibacy, which horrified many people in the ancient world. - JMG

1. Hermes: All that is moved, Asclepius, is it not moved in something and by something?

Asclepius: Assuredly.

H: And must not that in which it's moved be greater than the moved?

A: It must.

H: Mover, again, has greater power than moved?

A: It has, of course.

H: The nature, furthermore, of that in which it's moved must be quite other from the nature of the moved?

A: It must completely.

2. H: Is not, again, this cosmos vast, [so vast] that than it there exists no body greater?

A: Assuredly.

H: And massive, too, for it is crammed with multitudes of other mighty frames, nay, rather all the other bodies that there are?

A: It is.

H: And yet the cosmos is a body?

A: It is a body.

H: And one that's moved?

3. A: Assuredly.

H: Of what size, then, must be the space in which it's moved, and of what kind [must be] the nature [of that space]? Must it not be far vaster [than the cosmos], in order that it may be able to find room for its continued course, so that the moved may not be cramped for want of room and lose its motion?

A: Something, Thrice-greatest one, it needs must be, immensely vast.

4. H: And of what nature? Must it not be, Asclepius, of just the contrary? And is not contrary to body bodiless?

A: Agreed.

H: Space, then, is bodiless. But bodiless must either be some godlike thing or God [Himself]. And by "some godlike thing" I mean no more the generable [i.e., that which is generated] but the ingenerable.

5. If, then, space be some godlike thing, it is substantial; but if 'tis God [Himself], it transcends substance. But it is to be thought of otherwise [than God], and in this way.

God is first “thinkable” <or “intelligible”> for us, not for Himself, for that the thing that's thought doth fall beneath the thinker's sense. God then cannot be “thinkable” unto Himself, in that He's thought of by Himself as being nothing else but what He thinks. But he is “something else” for us, and so He's thought of by us.

6. If space is, therefore, to be thought, [it should] not, [then, be thought as] God, but space. If God is also to be thought, [He should] not [be conceived] as space, but as energy that can contain [all space].

Further, all that is moved is moved not in the moved but in the stable. And that which moves [another] is of course stationary, for 'tis impossible that it should move with it.

A: How is it, then, that things down here, Thrice-greatest one, are moved with those that are [already] moved? For thou hast said the errant spheres were moved by the inerrant one.

H: This is not, O Asclepius, a moving with, but one against; they are not moved with one another, but one against the other. It is this contrariety which turneth the resistance of their motion into rest. For that resistance is the rest of motion.

7. Hence, too, the errant spheres, being moved contrarily to the inerrant one, are moved by one another by mutual contrariety, [and also] by the stable one through contrariety itself. And this can otherwise not be.

The Bears up there <i.e., Ursa Major and Minor>, which neither set nor rise, think'st thou they rest or move?

A: They move, Thrice-greatest one.

H: And what their motion, my Asclepius?

A: Motion that turns for ever round the same.

H: But revolution - motion around same - is fixed by rest. For “round-the-same” doth stop “beyond-same”. “Beyond-same” then, being stopped, if it be steadied in “round-same” - the contrary stands firm, being rendered ever stable by its contrariety.

8. Of this I'll give thee here on earth an instance, which the eye can see. Regard the animals down here - a man, for instance, swimming! The water moves, yet the resistance of his hands and feet give him stability, so that he is not borne along with it, nor sunk thereby.

A: Thou hast, Thrice-greatest one, adduced a most clear instance.

H: All motion, then, is caused in station and by station.

The motion, therefore, of the cosmos (and of every other hylic <i.e., material> animal) will not be caused by things exterior to the cosmos, but by things interior [outward] to the exterior - such [things] as soul, or spirit, or some such other thing incorporeal.

'Tis not the body that doth move the living thing in it; nay, not even the whole [body of the universe a lesser] body e'en though there be no life in it.

9. A: What meanest thou by this, Thrice-greatest one? Is it not bodies, then, that move the stock and stone and all the other things inanimate?

H: By no means, O Asclepius. The something-in-the-body, the that-which-moves the thing inanimate, this surely's not a body, for that it moves the two of them - both body of the lifter and the lifted? So that a thing that's lifeless will not move a lifeless thing. That which doth move [another thing] is animate, in that it is the mover.

Thou seest, then, how heavy laden is the soul, for it alone doth lift two bodies. That things, moreover, moved are moved in something as well as moved by something is clear.

10. A: Yea, O Thrice-greatest one, things moved must needs be moved in something void.

H: Thou sayest well, O [my] Asclepius! For naught of things that are is void. Alone the "is-not" is void [and] stranger to subsistence. For that which is subsistent can never change to void.

A: Are there, then, O Thrice-greatest one, no such things as an empty cask, for instance, and an empty jar, a cup and vat, and other things like unto them?

H: Alack, Asclepius, for thy far-wandering from the truth! Think'st thou that things most full and most replete are void?

11. A: How meanest thou, Thrice-greatest one?

H: Is not air body?

A: It is.

H: And doth this body not pervade all things, and so, pervading, fill them? And "body"; doth body not consist from blending of the "four" <elements>? Full, then, of air are all thou callest void; and if of air, then of the "four".

Further, of this the converse follows, that all thou callest full are void - of air; for that they have their space filled out with other bodies, and, therefore, are not able to receive the air therein. These, then, which thou dost say are void, they should be hollow named, not void; for they not only are, but they are full of air and spirit.

12. A: Thy argument (logos), Thrice-greatest one, is not to be gainsaid; air is a body. Further, it is this body which doth pervade all things, and so, pervading, fill them. What are we, then, to call that space in which the all doth move?

H: The bodiless, Asclepius.

A: What, then, is Bodiless?

H: 'Tis Mind and Reason (logos), whole out of whole, all self-embracing, free from all body, from all error free, unsensible to body and untouchable, self stayed in self, containing all, preserving those that are, whose rays, to use a likeness, are Good, Truth, Light beyond light, the Archetype of soul.

A: What, then, is God?

13. H: Not any one of these is He; for He it is that causeth them to be, both all and each and every thing of all that are. Nor hath He left a thing beside that is-not; but they are all from things-that-are and not from things-that-are-not. For that the things-that-are-not have naturally no power of being anything, but naturally have the power of the inability-to-be. And, conversely, the things-that-are have not the nature of some time not-being.

14. A: What say'st thou ever, then, God is?

H: God, therefore, is not Mind, but Cause that the Mind is; God is not Spirit, but Cause that Spirit is; God is not Light, but Cause that the Light is. Hence one should honor God with these two names [the Good and Father] - names which pertain to Him alone and no one else.

For no one of the other so-called gods, no one of men, or daimones, can be in any measure Good, but God alone; and He is Good alone and nothing else. The rest of things are separable all from the Good's nature; for [all the rest] are soul and body, which have no place that can contain the Good.

15. For that as mighty is the Greatness of the Good as is the Being of all things that are - both bodies and things bodiless, things sensible and intelligible things. Call thou not, therefore, aught else Good, for thou would'st imious be; nor anything at all at any time call God but Good alone, for so thou would'st again be impious.

16. Though, then, the Good is spoken of by all, it is not understood by all, what thing it is. Not only, then, is God not understood by all, but both unto the gods and some of the men they out of ignorance do give the name of Good, though they can never either be or become Good. For they are very different from God, while Good can never be distinguished from Him, for that God is the same as Good.

The rest of the immortal ones are nonetheless honored with the name of God, and spoken of as gods; but God is Good not out of courtesy but out of nature. For that God's

nature and the Good is one; one of the kind of both, from which all other kinds [proceed].

The Good is he who gives all things and naught receives. God, then, doth give all things and receive naught. God, then, is Good, and Good is God.

17. The other name of God is Father, again because He is the that-which-maketh-all. The part of father is to make.

Wherefore child-making is a very great and a most pious thing in life for them who think aright, and to leave life on earth without a child a very great misfortune and impiety; and he who hath no child is punished by the daimones after death.

And this is the punishment: that that man's soul who hath no child, shall be condemned unto a body with neither man's nor woman's nature, a thing accursed beneath the sun.

Wherefore, Asclepius, let not your sympathies be with the man who hath no child, but rather pity his mishap, knowing what punishment abides for him.

Let all that has been said then, be to thee, Asclepius, an introduction to the gnosis of the nature of all things.

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III. The Sacred Sermon

The Corpus Hermeticum

translated by G.R.S. Mead

III. The Sacred Sermon

This brief and apparently somewhat garbled text recounts the creation and nature of the world in terms much like those of the Poemandres. The major theme is the renewal of all things in a cyclic universe, with the seven planetary rulers again playing a major role.
- JMG

1. The Glory of all things is God, Godhead and Godly Nature. Source of the things that are is God, who is both Mind and Nature - yea Matter, the Wisdom that reveals all things. Source [too] is Godhead - yea Nature, Energy, Necessity, and End, and Making-new-again.

Darkness that knew no bounds was in Abyss, and Water [too] and subtle Breath intelligent; these were by Power of God in Chaos.

Then Holy Light arose; and there collected 'neath Dry Space <literally: "sand"> from out Moist Essence Elements; and all the Gods do separate things out from fecund Nature.

2. All things being undefined and yet unwrought, the light things were assigned unto the height, the heavy ones had their foundations laid down underneath the moist part of Dry Space, the universal things being bounded off by Fire and hanged in Breath to keep them up.

And Heaven was seen in seven circles; its Gods were visible in forms of stars with all their signs; while Nature had her members made articulate together with the Gods in her. And [Heaven's] periphery revolved in cyclic course, borne on by Breath of God.

3. And every God by his own proper power brought forth what was appointed him. Thus

there arose four-footed beasts, and creeping things, and those that in the water dwell, and things with wings, and everything that beareth seed, and grass, and shoot of every flower, all having in themselves seed of again-becoming.

And they selected out the births of men for gnosis of the works of God and attestation of the energy of Nature; the multitude of men for lordship over all beneath the heaven and gnosis of its blessings, that they might increase in increasing and multiply in multitude, and every soul infleshed by revolution of the Cyclic Gods, for observation of the marvels of Heaven and Heaven's Gods' revolution, and of the works of God and energy of Nature, for tokens of its blessings, for gnosis of the power of God, that they might know the fates that follow good and evil [deeds] and learn the cunning work of all good arts.

4. [Thus] there begins their living and their growing wise, according to the fate appointed by the revolution of the Cyclic Gods, and their deceasing for this end.

And there shall be memorials mighty of their handiworks upon the earth, leaving dim trace behind when cycles are renewed.

For every birth of flesh ensouled, and of the fruit of seed, and every handiwork, though it decay, shall of necessity renew itself, both by the renovation of the Gods and by the turning-round of Nature's rhythmic wheel.

For that whereas the Godhead is Nature's ever-making-new-again the cosmic mixture, Nature herself is also co-established in that Godhead.

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The Cup or Monad

The Corpus Hermeticum

translated by G.R.S. Mead

IV. The Cup or Monad

<This short text gives an unusually lucid overview of the foundations of Hermetic thought. The stress on rejection of the body and its pleasures, and on the division of humanity into those with Mind and those without, are reminiscent of some of the so-called “Gnostic” writings of the same period. The idea that the division is a matter of choice, on the other hand, is a pleasant variation on the almost Calvinist flavor of writings such as the Apocalypse of Adam.

<Mead speculates that the imagery of the Cup in this text may have a distant connection, by way of unorthodox ideas about Communion, with the legends of the Holy Grail. - JMG>

1. Hermes: With Reason (Logos), not with hands, did the World-maker make the universal World; so that thou shouldst think of him as everywhere and ever-being, the Author of all things, and One and Only, who by His Will all beings hath created.

This Body of Him is a thing no man can touch, or see, or measure, a body inextensible, like to no other frame. 'Tis neither Fire nor Water, Air nor Breath; yet all of them come from it. Now being Good he willed to consecrate this [Body] to Himself alone, and set its Earth in order and adorn it.

2. So down [to Earth] He sent the Cosmos of this Frame Divine - man, a life that cannot die, and yet a life that dies. And o'er [all other] lives and over Cosmos [too], did man

excel by reason of the Reason (Logos) and the Mind. For contemplator of God's works did man become; he marvelled and did strive to know their Author.

3. Reason (Logos) indeed, O Tat, among all men hath He distributed, but Mind not yet; not that He grudgeth any, for grudging cometh not from Him, but hath its place below, within the souls of men who have no Mind.

Tat: Why then did God, O father, not on all bestow a share of Mind?

H: He willed, my son, to have it set up in the midst for souls, just as it were a prize.

4. T: And where hath He set it up?

H: He filled a mighty Cup with it, and sent it down, joining a Herald [to it], to whom He gave command to make this proclamation to the hearts of men:

Baptize thyself with this Cup's baptism, what heart can do so, thou that hast faith thou canst ascend to him that hath sent down the Cup, thou that dost know for what thou didst come into being!

As many then as understood the Herald's tidings and doused themselves in Mind, became partakers in the Gnosis; and when they had "received the Mind" they were made "perfect men".

But they who do not understand the tidings, these, since they possess the aid of Reason [only] and not Mind, are ignorant wherefor they have come into being and whereby.

5. The senses of such men are like irrational creatures'; and as their [whole] make-up is in their feelings and their impulses, they fail in all appreciation of <lit.: "they do not wonder at"> those things which really are worth contemplation. These center all their thought upon the pleasures of the body and its appetites, in the belief that for its sake man hath come into being.

But they who have received some portion of God's gift, these, Tat, if we judge by their deeds, have from Death's bonds won their release; for they embrace in their own Mind all things, things on the earth, things in the heaven, and things above the heaven - if there be aught. And having raised themselves so far they sight the Good; and having sighted it, they look upon their sojourn here as a mischance; and in disdain of all, both things in body and the bodiless, they speed their way unto that One and Only One.

6. This is, O Tat, the Gnosis of the Mind, Vision of things Divine; God-knowledge is it, for the Cup is God's.

T: Father, I, too, would be baptized.

H: Unless thou first shall hate thy Body, son, thou canst not love thy Self. But if thou

lov'st thy Self thou shalt have Mind, and having Mind thou shalt share in the Gnosis.

T: Father, what dost thou mean?

H: It is not possible, my son, to give thyself to both - I mean to things that perish and to things divine. For seeing that existing things are twain, Body and Bodiless, in which the perishing and the divine are understood, the man who hath the will to choose is left the choice of one or the other; for it can never be the twain should meet. And in those souls to whom the choice is left, the waning of the one causes the other's growth to show itself.

7. Now the choosing of the Better not only proves a lot most fair for him who makes the choice, seeing it makes the man a God, but also shows his piety to God. Whereas the [choosing] of the Worse, although it doth destroy the "man", it doth only disturb God's harmony to this extent, that as processions pass by in the middle of the way, without being able to do anything but take the road from others, so do such men move in procession through the world led by their bodies' pleasures.

8. This being so, O Tat, what comes from God hath been and will be ours; but that which is dependent on ourselves, let this press onward and have no delay, for 'tis not God, 'tis we who are the cause of evil things, preferring them to good.

Thou see'st, son, how many are the bodies through which we have to pass, how many are the choirs of daimones, how vast the system of the star-courses [through which our Path doth lie], to hasten to the One and Only God.

For to the Good there is no other shore; It hath no bounds; It is without an end; and for Itself It is without beginning, too, though unto us it seemeth to have one - the Gnosis.

9. Therefore to It Gnosis is no beginning; rather is it [that Gnosis doth afford] to us the first beginning of its being known.

Let us lay hold, therefore, of the beginning. and quickly speed through all [we have to pass].

`Tis very hard, to leave the things we have grown used to, which meet our gaze on every side, and turn ourselves back to the Old Old [Path].

Appearances delight us, whereas things which appear not make their believing hard.

Now evils are the more apparent things, whereas the Good can never show Itself unto the eyes, for It hath neither form nor figure.

Therefore the Good is like Itself alone, and unlike all things else; or `tis impossible that That which hath no body should make Itself apparent to a body.

10. The "Like's" superiority to the "Unlike" and the "Unlike's" inferiority unto the "Like"

consists in this:

The Oneness being Source and Root of all, is in all things as Root and Source. Without [this] Source is naught; whereas the Source [Itself] is from naught but itself, since it is Source of all the rest. It is Itself Its Source, since It may have no other Source.

The Oneness then being Source, containeth every number, but is contained by none; engendereth every number, but is engendered by no other one.

11. Now all that is engendered is imperfect, it is divisible, to increase subject and to decrease; but with the Perfect [One] none of these things doth hold. Now that which is increasable increases from the Oneness, but succumbs through its own feebleness when it no longer can contain the One.

And now, O Tat, God's Image hath been sketched for thee, as far as it can be; and if thou wilt attentively dwell on it and observe it with thine heart's eyes, believe me, son, thou'lt find the Path that leads above; nay, that Image shall become thy Guide itself, because the Sight [Divine] hath this peculiar [charm], it holdeth fast and draweth unto it those who succeed in opening their eyes, just as, they say, the magnet [draweth] iron.

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V. Though Unmanifest God Is Most Manifest

<This sermon is a fairly straightforward Hermetic version of the “argument by design”, a standard approach since ancient times to a proof of the existence of God. Typically, for a Hermetic tractate, its choice of evidence includes a paeon on the beauty and perfection of the human form. - JMG>

1. I will recount to thee this sermon (logos) too, O Tat, that thou may'st cease to be without the mysteries of the God beyond all name. And mark thou well how that which to the many seems unmanifest, will grow most manifest for thee.

Now were it manifest, it would not be. For all that is made manifest is subject to becoming, for it hath been made manifest. But the Unmanifest for ever is, for It doth not desire to be made manifest. It ever is, and maketh manifest all other things.

Being Himself unmanifest, as ever being and ever making-manifest, Himself is not made manifest. God is not made Himself; by thinking-manifest <i.e., thinking into manifestation>, He thinketh all things manifest.

Now “thinking-manifest” deals with things made alone, for thinking-manifest is nothing else than making.

2. He, then, alone who is not made, 'tis clear, is both beyond all power of thinking-manifest, and is unmanifest.

And as He thinketh all things manifest, He manifests through all things and in all, and most of all in whatsoever things He wills to manifest.

Do thou, then, Tat, my son, pray first unto our Lord and Father, the One-and-Only One,

from whom the One doth come, to show His mercy unto thee, in order that thou mayest have the power to catch a thought of this so mighty God, one single beam of Him to shine into thy thinking. For thought alone “sees” the Unmanifest, in that it is itself unmanifest.

If, then, thou hast the power, He will, Tat, manifest to thy mind's eyes. The Lord begrudgeth not Himself to anything, but manifests Himself through the whole world.

Thou hast the power of taking thought, of seeing it and grasping it in thy own “hands”, and gazing face to face upon God's Image. But if what is within thee even is unmanifest to thee, how, then, shall He Himself who is within thy self be manifest for thee by means of [outer] eyes?

3. But if thou wouldst “see” him, bethink thee of the sun, bethink thee of moon's course, bethink thee of the order of the stars. Who is the One who watcheth o'er that order? For every order hath its boundaries marked out by place and number.

The sun's the greatest god of gods in heaven; to whom all of the heavenly gods give place as unto king and master. And he, this so-great one, he greater than the earth and sea, endures to have above him circling smaller stars than him. Out of respect to Whom, or out of fear of Whom, my son, [doth he do this]?

Nor like nor equal is the course each of these stars describes in heaven. Who [then] is He who marketh out the manner of their course and its extent?

4. The Bear up there that turneth round itself, and carries round the whole cosmos with it - Who is the owner of this instrument? Who He who hath set round the sea its bounds? Who He who hath set on its seat the earth?

For, Tat, there is someone who is the Maker and the Lord of all these things. It could not be that number, place and measure could be kept without someone to make them. No order whatsoever could be made by that which lacketh place and lacketh measure; nay, even this is not without a lord, my son. For if the orderless lacks something, in that it is not lord of order's path, it also is beneath a lord - the one who hath not yet ordained it order.

5. Would that it were possible for thee to get thee wings, and soar into the air, and, poised midway 'tween earth and heaven, behold the earth's solidity, the sea's fluidity (the flowings of its streams), the spaciousness of air, fire's swiftness, [and] the coursing of the stars, the swiftness of heaven's circuit round them [all]!

Most blessed sight were it, my son, to see all these beneath one sway - the motionless in motion, and the unmanifest made manifest; whereby is made this order of the cosmos and the cosmos which we see of order.

6. If thou would'st see Him too through things that suffer death, both on the earth and in the deep, think of a man's being fashioned in the womb, my son, and strictly scrutinize

the art of Him who fashions him, and learn who fashioneth this fair and godly image of the Man.

Who [then] is He who traceth out the circles of the eyes; who He who boreth out the nostrils and the ears; who He who openeth [the portal of] the mouth; who He who doth stretch out and tie the nerves; who He who channels out the veins; who He who hardeneth the bones; who He who covereth the flesh with skin; who He who separates the fingers and the joints; who He who widens out a treading for the feet; who He who diggeth out the ducts; who He who spreadeth out the spleen; who he who shapeth heart like to a pyramid; who He who setteth ribs together; who He who wideneth the liver out; who He who maketh lungs like to a sponge; who He who maketh belly stretch so much; who he who doth make prominent the parts most honorable, so that they may be seen, while hiding out of sight those of least honor?

7. Behold how many arts [employed] on one material, how many labors on one single sketch; and all exceeding fair, and all in perfect measure, yet all diversified! Who made them all? What mother, or what sire, save God alone, unmanifest, who hath made all things by His Will?

8. And no one saith a statue or a picture comes to be without a sculptor or [without] a painter; doth [then] such workmanship as this exist without a Worker? What depth of blindness, what deep impiety, what depth of ignorance! See, [then] thou ne'er, son Tat, deprivest works of Worker!

Nay, rather is He greater than all names, so great is He, the Father of them all. For verily He is the Only One, and this is His work, to be a father.

9. So, if thou forcest me somewhat too bold, to speak, His being is conceiving of all things and making [them].

And as without its maker its is impossible that anything should be, so ever is He not unless He ever makes all things, in heaven, in air, in earth, in deep, in all of cosmos, in every part that is and that is not of everything. For there is naught in all the world that is not He.

He is Himself, both things that are and things that are not. The things that are He hath made manifest, He keepeth things that are not in Himself.

10. He is the God beyond all name; He the unmanifest, He the most manifest; He whom the mind [alone] can contemplate, He visible to the eyes [as well]; He is the one of no body, the one of many bodies, nay, rather He of every body.

Naught is there which he is not. For all are He and He is all. And for this cause hath He all names, in that they are one Father's. And for this cause hath He Himself no nome, in that He's Father of [them] all.

Who, then, may sing Thee praise of Thee, or [praise] to Thee?

Whither, again, am I to turn my eyes to sing Thy praise; above, below, within, without?

There is no way, no place [is there] about Thee, nor any other thing of things that are.

All [are] in Thee; all [are] from Thee, O Thou who givest all and takest naught, for Thou hast all and naught is there Thou hast not.

11. And when, O Father, shall I hymn Thee? For none can seize Thy hour or time.

For what, again, shall I sing hymn? For things that Thou hast made, or things Thou hast not? For things Thou hast made manifest, or things Thou hast concealed?

How, further, shall I hymn Thee? As being of myself? As having something of mine own? As being other?

For that Thou art whatever I may be; Thou art whatever I may do; Thou art whatever I may speak.

For Thou art all, and there is nothing else which Thou art not. Thou art all that which doth exist, and Thou art what doth not exist - Mind when Thou thinkest, and Father when Thou makest, and God when Thou dost energize, and Good and Maker of all things.

For that the subtler part of matter is the air, of air the soul, of soul the mind, and of mind God.

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VI. In God Alone Is Good And Elsewhere Nowhere

<This sermon on the nature of the Good, like To Asclepius (CH II), relies heavily on the technical language of classical Greek philosophy - a point which some of Mead's translations tend to obscure. "The Good," in Greek thought, is also the self-caused and self-sufficient, and thus has little in common with later conceptions of "goodness," just as the Latin word virtus and the modern Christian concept of "virtue" are very nearly

opposites despite their etymological connection. The word “passion” here also needs to be understood in its older sense, as the opposite of “action” (cf. “active” and “passive”).

<The negative attitude toward humanity and the cosmos which appears in this text contrasts sharply with the more positive assessment found, for example, in the Poemandres (CH I) or in the Asclepius - a reminder that these documents are relics of a diverse and not necessarily consistent school of thought. - JMG>

1. Good, O Asclepius, is in none else save in God alone; nay, rather, Good is God Himself eternally.

If it be so, [Good] must be essence, from every kind of motion and becoming free (though naught is free from It), possessed of stable energy around Itself, never too little, nor too much, an ever-full supply. [Though] one, yet [is It] source of all; for what supplieth all is Good. When I, moreover, say [supplieth] altogether [all], it is for ever Good. But this belongs to no one else save God alone.

For He stands not in need of any thing, so that desiring it He should be bad; nor can a single thing of things that are be lost to him, on losing which He should be pained; for pain is part of bad.

Nor is there aught superior to Him, that He should be subdued by it; nor any peer to Him to do Him wrong, or [so that] He should fall in love on its account; nor aught that gives no ear to Him, whereat He should grow angry; nor wiser aught, for Him to envy.

2. Now as all these are non-existent in His being, what is there left but Good alone?

For just as naught of bad is to be found in such transcendent Being, so too in no one of the rest will Good be found.

For in them are all of the other things <i.e., those things which are not Good> - both in the little and the great, both in each severally and in this living one that's greater than them all and the mightiest [of them] <i.e., the cosmos>.

For things subject to birth abound in passions, birth in itself being passible. But where there's passion, nowhere is there Good; and where is Good, nowhere a single passion. For where is day, nowhere is night; and where is night, day is nowhere.

Wherefore in genesis the Good can never be, but only be in the ingenerate.

But seeing that the sharing in all things hath been bestowed on matter, so doth it share in Good.

In this way is the Cosmos Good; that, in so far as it doth make all things, as far as making goes it's Good, but in all other things it is not Good. For it's both passible and subject unto motion, and maker of things passible.

3. Whereas in man by greater or less of bad is good determined. For what is not too bad down here, is good, and good down here is the least part of bad.

It cannot, therefore, be that good down here should be quite clean of bad, for down here good is fouled with bad; and being fouled, it stays no longer good, and staying not it changes into bad.

In God alone, is, therefore, Good, or rather Good is God Himself.

So then, Asclepius, the name alone of Good is found in men, the thing itself nowhere [in them], for this can never be.

For no material body doth contain It - a thing bound on all sides by bad, by labors, pains, desires and passions, by error and by foolish thoughts.

And greatest ill of all, Asclepius, is that each of these things that have been said above, is thought down here to be the greatest good.

And what is still an even greater ill, is belly-lust, the error that doth lead the band of all the other ills - the thing that makes us turn down here from Good.

4. And I, for my part, give thanks to God, that He hath cast it in my mind about the Gnosis of the Good, that it can never be It should be in the world. For that the world is "fullness" of the bad, but God of Good, and Good of God.

The excellencies of the Beautiful are round the very essence [of the Good]; nay, they do seem too pure, too unalloyed; perchance 'tis they that are themselves Its essences.

For one may dare to say, Asclepius - if essence, sooth, He have - God's essence is the Beautiful; the Beautiful is further also Good.

There is no Good that can be got from objects in the world. For all the things that fall beneath the eye are image-things and pictures as it were; while those that do not meet [the eye are the realities], especially the [essence] of the Beautiful and Good.

Just as the eye cannot see God, so can it not behold the Beautiful and Good. For that they are integral parts of God, wedded to Him alone, inseparate familiars, most beloved, with whom God is Himself in love, or they with God.

5. If thou canst God conceive, thou shalt conceive the Beautiful and Good, transcending Light, made lighter than the Light by God. That Beauty is beyond compare, inimitate that Good, e'en as God is Himself.

As, then, thou dost conceive of God, conceive the Beautiful and Good. For they cannot be joined with aught of other things that live, since they can never be divorced from God.

Seek'st thou for God, thou seekest for the Beautiful. One is the Path that leadeth unto It
- Devotion joined with Gnosis.

6. And thus it is that they who do not know and do not tread Devotion's Path, do dare to call man beautiful and good, though he have ne'er e'en in his visions seen a whit that's Good, but is enveloped with every kind of bad, and thinks the bad is good, and thus doth make unceasing use of it, and even feareth that it should be ta'en from him, so straining every nerve not only to preserve but even to increase it.

Such are the things that men call good and beautiful, Asclepius - things which we cannot flee or hate; for hardest thing of all is that we've need of them and cannot live without them.

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VII. The Greatest Ill Among Men is Ignorance of God

<A good solid diatribe in colorful language. One easily imagines it being delivered at the Hermetic equivalent of a tent revival meeting. - JMG>

1. Whither stumble ye, sots, who have sopped up the wine of ignorance and can so far not carry it that ye already even spew it forth?

Stay ye, be sober, gaze upwards with the [true] eyes of the heart! And if ye cannot all, yet ye at least who can!

For that the ill of ignorance doth pour o`er all the earth and overwhelm the soul that's battened down within the body, preventing it from fetching port within Salvation's harbors.

2. Be ye then not carried off by the fierce flood, but using the shore-current <lit., "back-current" or "up-current">, ye who can, make for Salvation's port, and, harboring there, seek ye for one to take you by the hand and lead you unto Gnosis' gates.

Where shines clear Light, of every darkness clean; where not a single soul is drunk, but

sober all they gaze with their hearts' eyes on Him who willeth to be seen.

No ear can hear Him, nor can eye see Him, nor tongue speak of Him, but [only] mind and heart.

But first thou must tear off from thee the cloak which thou dost wear - the web of ignorance, the ground of bad, corruption's chain, the carapace of darkness, the living death, sensation's corpse, the tomb thou carriest with thee, the robber in thy house, who through the things he loveth, hateth thee, and through the things he hateth, bears thee malice.

3. Such is the hateful cloak thou wearest - that throttles thee [and holds thee] down to it, in order that thou may'st not gaze above, and having seen the Beauty of the Truth, and Good that dwells therein, detest the bad of it; having found out the plot that it hath schemed against thee, by making void of sense those seeming things which men think senses.

For that it hath with mass of matter blocked them up and crammed them full of loathsome lust, so that thou may'st not hear about the things that thou should'st hear, nor see the things thou should'st see.

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VIII. That No One of Existing Things doth Perish, but Men in Error Speak of Their
Changes as Destructions and as Deaths

<The idea of cyclic change central to CH III, "The Sacred Sermon", also takes center stage here. A current of ancient speculation grounded in astrology held that as the planets returned after vast cycles of time to the same positions, so all events on earth would repeat themselves precisely into eternity in the future - and had done so from eternity in the past. The technical term for this recurrence, apocatastasis, is the word Mead translates as "restoration" in the beginning of section 4.

<Mead footnotes this tractate as "obscure" and "faulty" in places, and his translation of the beginning of section 3 is conjectural. - JMG>

1. [Hermes:] Concerning Soul and Body, son, we now must speak; in what way Soul is deathless, and whence comes the activity in composing and dissolving Body.

For there's no death for aught of things [that are]; the thought this word conveys, is either void of fact, or [simply] by the knocking off a syllable what is called "death", doth stand for "deathless".

For death is of destruction, and nothing in the Cosmos is destroyed. For if Cosmos is

second God, a life <or living creature> that cannot die, it cannot be that any part of this immortal life should die. All things in Cosmos are parts of Cosmos, and most of all is man, the rational animal.

2. For truly first of all, eternal and transcending birth, is God the universals' Maker. Second is he "after His image", Cosmos, brought into being by Him, sustained and fed by Him, made deathless, as by his own Sire, living for aye, as ever free from death.

Now that which ever-liveth, differs from the Eternal; for He hath not been brought to being by another, and even if He have been brought to being, He hath not been brought to being by Himself, but ever is brought into being.

For the Eternal, in that It is eternal, is the all. The Father is Himself eternal of Himself, but Cosmos hath become eternal and immortal by the Father.

3. And of the matter stored beneath it <i.e., beneath the cosmos>, the Father made of it a universal body, and packing it together made it spherical - wrapping it round the life - [a sphere] which is immortal in itself, and that doth make materiality eternal.

But He, the Father, full-filled with His ideas, did sow the lives <or living creatures> into the sphere, and shut them in as in a cave, willing to order forth the life with every kind of living.

So He with deathlessness enclosed the universal body, that matter might not wish to separate itself from body's composition, and so dissolve into its own [original] unordered.

For matter, son, when it was yet incorporate <i.e., not yet formed into bodies>, was in unordered. And it doth still retain down here this [nature of unordered] enveloping the rest of the small lives <or living creatures> - that increase-and-decrease which men call death.

4. It is round earthly lives that this unordered doth exist. For that the bodies of the heavenly ones preserve one order allotted to them by the Father as their rule; and it is by the restoration of each one [of them] this order is preserved indissoluble.

The "restoration" of bodies on the earth is thus their composition, whereas their dissolution restores them to those bodies which can never be dissolved, that is to say, which know no death. Privation, thus, of sense is brought about, not loss of bodies.

5. Now the third life - Man, after the image of the Cosmos made, [and] having mind, after the Father's will, beyond all earthly lives - not only doth have feeling with the second God <i.e., the Cosmos>, but also hath conception of the first; for of the one 'tis sensible as of a body, while of the other it conceives as bodiless and the Good Mind.

Tat: Doth then this life not perish?

Hermes: Hush, son! and understand what God, what Cosmos [is], what is a life that cannot die, and what a life subject to dissolution.

Yea, understand the Cosmos is by God and in God; but Man by Cosmos and in Cosmos.

The source and limit and the constitution of all things is God.

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IX. On Thought and Sense

<This somewhat diffuse essay covers a series of topics, starting with (and to some extent from) the concept that the set of perceptions we call "thoughts" and the set we call "sensory perceptions" are not significantly different from each other. The implications of this idea play a significant role in later Hermetic thought, particularly in the areas of magic and the Art of Memory; in this tractate, though, the issues involved are barely touched, and the argument wanders into moral dualisms and the equally important, but distinct, idea that the Cosmos is itself a divine creative power.

<Section 10, in which understanding is held up as the source and precondition of belief, should probably be seen as part of the same ancient debate on the roles of faith and reason that gave rise to Tertullian's famous credo quia absurdum ("I believe because it is absurd"). - JMG>

1. I gave the Perfect Sermon (Logos) yesterday, Asclepius; today I think it right, as sequel thereunto, to go through point by point the Sermon about Sense.

Now sense and thought do seem to differ, in that the former has to do with matter, the latter has to do with substance. But unto me both seem to be at-one and not to differ - in men I mean. In other lives <or living creatures> sense is at-oned with Nature, but in men thought.

Now mind doth differ just as much from thought as God doth from divinity. For that divinity by God doth come to be, and by mind thought, the sister of the word (logos) and instruments of one another. For neither doth the word (logos) find utterance without thought, nor is thought manifested without word.

2. So sense and thought both flow together into man, as though they were entwined with one another. For neither without sensing can one think, nor without thinking sense.

But it is possible [they say] to think a thing apart from sense, as those who fancy sights in dreams. But unto me it seems that both of these activities occur in dream-sight, and sense doth pass out of the sleeping to the waking state.

For man is separated into soul and body, and only when the two sides of his sense agree together, does utterance of its thought conceived by mind take place.

3. For it is mind that doth conceive all thoughts - good thoughts when it receives the seeds from God, their contraries when [it receiveth them] from the daimonials; no part of Cosmos being free of daimon, who stealthily doth creep into the daimon who's illumined by God's light <i.e., the human soul>, and sow in him the seed of its own energy.

And mind conceives the seed thus sown, adultery, murder, parricide, [and] sacrilege, impiety, [and] strangling, casting down precipices, and all such other deeds as are the work of evil daimons.

4. The seeds of God, 'tis true, are few, but vast and fair, and good - virtue and self-control, devotion. Devotion is God-gnosis; and he who knoweth God, being filled with all good things, thinks godly thoughts and not thoughts like the many [think].

For this cause they who Gnostic are, please not the many, nor the many them. They are thought mad and laughed at; they're hated and despised, and sometimes even put to death.

For we did say that bad must needs dwell on earth, where 'tis in its own place. Its place is earth, and not Cosmos, as some will sometimes say with impious tongue.

But he who is a devotee of God, will bear with all - once he has sensed the Gnosis. For such an one all things, e'en though they be for others bad, are for him good; deliberately he doth refer them all unto the Gnosis. And, thing most marvelous, 'tis he alone who maketh bad things good.

5. But I return once more to the Discourse (Logos) on Sense. That sense doth share with thought in man, doth constitute him man. But 'tis not [every] man, as I have said, who benefits by thought; for this man is material, that other one substantial.

For the material man, as I have said, [consorting] with the bad, doth have his seed of thought from daimons; while the substantial men [consorting] with the Good, are saved by God.

Now God is Maker of all things, and in His making, He maketh all [at last] like to Himself; but they, while they're becoming good by exercise of their activity, are unproductive things.

It is the working of the Cosmic Course that maketh their becomings what they are, befouling some of them with bad and others of them making clean with good.

For Cosmos, too, Asclepius, possesseth sense-and-thought peculiar to itself, not like that of man; 'tis not so manifold, but as it were a better and a simpler one.

6. The single sense-and-thought of Cosmos is to make all things, and make them back into itself again, as Organ of the Will of God, so organized that it, receiving all the seeds into itself from God, and keeping them within itself, may make all manifest, and [then] dissolving them, make them all new again; and thus, like a Good Gardener of Life, things that have been dissolved, it taketh to itself, and giveth them renewal once again.

There is no thing to which it gives not life; but taking all unto itself it makes them live, and is at the same time the Place of Life and its Creator.

7. Now bodies matter [-made] are in diversity. Some are of earth, of water some, some are of air, and some of fire.

But they are all composed; some are more [composite], and some are simpler. The heavier ones are more [composed], the lighter less so.

It is the speed of Cosmos' Course that works the manifoldness of the kinds of births. For being a most swift Breath, it doth bestow their qualities on bodies together with the One Pleroma - that of Life.

8. God, then, is Sire of Cosmos; Cosmos, of all in Cosmos. And Cosmos is God's Son; but things in Cosmos are by Cosmos.

And properly hath it been called Cosmos [Order]; for that it orders all with their diversity of birth, with its not leaving aught without its life, with the unweariedness of its activity, the speed of its necessity, the composition of its elements, and order of its creatures.

The same, then, of necessity and propriety should have the name of Order.

The sense-and-thought, then, of all lives doth come into them from without, inbreathed by what contains [them all]; whereas Cosmos receives them once for all together with its coming into being, and keeps them as a gift from God.

9. But God is not, as some suppose, beyond the reach of sense-and-thought. It is through superstition men thus impiously speak.

For all the things that are, Asclepius, all are in God, are brought by God to be, and do depend on Him - both things that act through bodies, and things that through soul-substance make [other things] to move, and things that make things live by means of spirit, and things that take unto themselves the things that are worn out.

And rightly so; nay, I would rather say, He doth not have these things; but I speak forth the truth, He is them all Himself. He doth not get them from without, but gives them out [from Him].

This is God's sense-and-thought, ever to move all things. And never time shall be when e'en a whit of things that are shall cease; and when I say "a whit of things that are", I mean a whit of God. For thigs that are, God hath; nor aught [is there] without Him, nor [is] He without aught.

10. These things should seem to thee, Asclepius, if thou dost understand them, true; but if thou dost not understand, things not to be believed.

To understand is to believe, to not believe is not to understand.

My word (logos) doth go before [thee] to the truth. But mighty is the mind, and when it hath been led by word up to a certain point, it hath the power to come before [thee] to the truth.

And having thought o'er all these things, and found them consonant with those which have already been translated by the reason, it hath [e'en now] believed, and found its rest in that Fair Faith.

To those, then, who by God['s good aid] do understand the things that have been said [by us] above, they're credible; but unto those who understand them not, incredible.

Let so much, then, suffice on thought-and-sense.

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X. The Key

The Corpus Hermeticum
translated by G.R.S. Mead

X. The Key

This longer tractate presents itself explicitly as a summary or abridgement of the General Sermons (CH II-IX), and discusses the Hermetic view of knowledge and its role in the lives and afterlives of human beings. The attentive reader will notice certain contradictions between the afterlife-teachings of this and previous tractates.

One of the central concepts of The Key, and of Hermetic thought generally, is the distinction between ordinary discursive knowledge which can be expressed in words (in Greek, *episteme*, which Mead translates somewhat clumsily as “science”) and transcendent, unitive knowledge which cannot be communicated (in Greek, *gnosis*, which Mead simply and sensibly leaves untranslated). The same distinction can be found in many systems of mystical thought. Unlike most of these, though, the Hermetic teachings place value on both.

Readers without much experience in the jargon of Classical philosophy will want to remember that “*hylē*” means “material”, “*passible*” means “subject to outside forces or to suffering”, and “*intelligible*” means “belonging to the realm of the Mind”, and “*motion*” includes all kinds of change. The special implications of “good” in Greek thought - of self-sufficiency and desirability - should also be kept in mind.

The delightful irony of the Zen moment early in section 9, when Hermes - in the middle of this very substantial lecture - defines the good and pious man as “he who doth not say much or lend his ear to much” and thus rules out both himself and his audience, seems to have been lost on subsequent commentators. - JMG

1. Hermes: My yesterday's discourse (*logos*) I did devote to thee, Asclepius, and so 'tis [only] right I should devote to thy to Tat; and this the more because 'tis the abridgement of the General Sermons (*Logoi*) which he has had addressed to him.

“God, Father and the Good”, then, Tat, hath the same nature, or more exactly, energy.

For nature is a predicate of growth, and used of things that change, both mobile and immobile, that is to say, both human and divine, each one of which He willeth into being.

But energy consists in something else, as we have shown in treating of the rest, both things divine and human things; which thing we ought to have in mind when treating of the Good.

2. God's energy is then His Will; further His essence is to will the being of all things. For what is “God and Father and the Good” but the “to be” of all that are not yet? Nay, subsistence self of everything that is; this, then, is God, this Father, this the Good; to Him is added naught of all the rest.

And though the Cosmos, that is to say the Sun, is also sire himself to them that share in him; yet so far is he not the cause of good unto the lives, he is not even of their living.

So that e'en if he be a sire, he is entirely so by compulsion of the Good's Good-will, apart from which nor being nor becoming could e'er be.

3. Again, the parent is the children's cause, both on the father's and the mother's side, only by sharing in the Good's desire [that doth pour] through the Sun. It is the Good which doeth the creating.

And such a power can be possessed by no one else than Him alone who taketh naught, but wills all things to be; I will not, Tat, say “makes”.

For that the maker is defective for long periods (in which he sometimes makes, and sometimes doth not make) both in the quality and in the quantity [of what he makes]; in that he sometimes maketh them so many and such like, and sometimes the reverse.

But “God and Father and the Good” is [cause] for all to be. So are at least these things for those who can see.

4. For It doth will to be, and It is both Itself and most of all by reason of Itself. Indeed, all other things beside are just because of It; for the distinctive feature of the Good is “that it should be known”. Such is the Good, O Tat.

Tat: Thou hast, O father, filled us so full of this so good and fairest sight, that thereby my mind's eye hath now become for me almost a thing to worship.

For that the vision of the Good doth not, like the sun's beam, firelike blaze on the eyes and make them close; nay, on the contrary, it shineth forth and maketh to increase the seeing of the eye, as far as e'er a man hath the capacity to hold the inflow of the radiance that the mind alone can see.

Not only does it come more swiftly down to us, but it does us no harm, and is instinct with all immortal life.

5. They who are able to drink in a somewhat more than others of this Sight, oftentimes from out the body fall asleep in this fairest Spectacle, as was the case with Uranus and Cronus, our forebears. may this be our lot too, O father mine!

Hermes: Yea, may it be, my son! But as it is, we are not yet strung to the Vision, and not as yet have we the power our mind's eye to unfold and gaze upon the Beauty of the Good - Beauty that naught can e'er corrupt or any comprehend.

For only then wilt thou upon It gaze when thou canst say no word concerning It. For Gnosis of the Good is holy silence and a giving holiday to every sense.

6. For neither can he who perceiveth It, perceive aught else; nor he who gazeth on It, gaze on aught else; nor hear aught else, nor stir his body any way. Staying his body's every sense and every motion he stayeth still.

And shining then all round his mind, It shines through his whole soul, and draws it out of body, transforming all of him to essence.

For it is possible, my son, that a man's soul should be made like to God, e'en while it still is in a body, if it doth contemplate the Beauty of the Good.

7. Tat: Made like to God? What dost thou, father, mean?

Hermes: Of every soul apart are transformations, son.

Tat: What meanest thou? Apart?

Hermes: Didst thou not, in the General Sermons, hear that from one Soul - the All-soul - come all these souls which are made to revolve in all the cosmos, as though divided off?

Of these souls, then, it is that there are many changes, some to a happier lot and some to [just] the contrary of this.

Thus some that were creeping things change into things that in the water dwell, the souls of water things change to earth-dwellers, those that live on earth change to things with wings, and souls that live in air change to men, while human souls reach the first step of deathlessness changed into daimones.

And so they circle to the choir of the Inerrant Gods; for of the Gods there are two choirs, the one Inerrant, and the other Errant. And this is the most perfect glory of the soul.

8. But if a soul on entering the body of a man persisteth in its vice, it neither tasteth deathlessness nor shareth in the Good; but speeding back again it turns into the path that leads to creeping things. This is the sentence of the vicious soul.

And the soul's vice is ignorance. For that the soul who hath no knowledge of the things that are, or knowledge of their nature, or of Good, is blinded by the body's passions and tossed about.

This wretched soul, not knowing what she is, becomes the slave of bodies of strange form in sorry plight, bearing the body as a load; not as the ruler, but the ruled. This [ignorance] is the soul's vice.

9. But on the other hand the virtue of the soul is Gnosis. For he who knows, he good and pious is, and still while on the earth divine.

Tat: But who is such an one, O father mine?

Hermes: He who doth not say much or lend his ear to much. For he who spendeth time in arguing and hearing arguments, doth shadow-fight. For "God, the Father and the Good", is not to be obtained by speech or hearing.

And yet though this is so, there are in all the beings senses, in that they cannot without senses be.

But Gnosis is far different from sense. For sense is brought about by that which hath the mastery o'er us, while Gnosis is the end <i.e., goal> of science, and science is God's

gift.

10. All science is incorporeal, the instrument it uses being the mind, just as the mind employs the body.

Both then come into bodies, [I mean] both things that are cognizable by mind alone and things material. For all things must consist out of antithesis and contrariety; and this can otherwise not be.

Tat: Who then is this material God of whom thou speakest?

Hermes: Cosmos is beautiful, but is not good - for that it is material and freely passible; and though it is the first of all things passible, yet is it in the second rank of being and wanting in itself.

And though it never hath itself its birth in time, but ever is, yet is its being in becoming, becoming for all time the genesis of qualities and quantities; for it is mobile and all material motion's genesis.

11. It is intelligible rest that moves material motion in this way, since Cosmos is a sphere - that is to say, a head. And naught of head above's material, as naught of feet below's intelligible, but all material.

And head itself is moved in a sphere-like way - that is to say, as head should move, is mind.

All then that are united to the "tissue" of this "head" (in which is soul) are in their nature free from death - just as when body hath been made in soul, are things that hath more soul than body.

Whereas those things which are at greater distance from this "tissue" - there, where are things which have a greater share of body than of soul - are by their nature subject unto death.

The whole, however, is a life; so that the universe consists of both the hylic and of the intelligible.

12. Again, the Cosmos is the first of living things, while man is second after it, though first of things subject to death.

Man hath the same ensouling power in him as all the rest of living things; yet is he not only not good, but even evil, for that he's subject unto death.

For though the Cosmos also is not good in that it suffers motion, it is not evil, in that it is not subject to death. But man, in that he's subject both to motion and to death, is evil.

13. Now then the principles of man are this-wise vehicled: mind in the reason (logos),

the reason in the soul, soul in the spirit <or, rather, vital spirits>, and spirit in the body.

Spirit pervading [body] by means of veins and arteries and blood, bestows upon the living creature motion, and as it were doth bear it in a way.

For this cause some do think the soul is blood, in that they do mistake its nature, not knowing that [at death] it is its spirit that must first withdraw into the soul, whereon the blood congeals and veins and arteries are emptied, and then the living creature <or life> is withdrawn; and this is body's death.

14. Now from one Source all things depend; while Source [dependeth] from the One and Only [One]. Source is, moreover, moved to become Source again; whereas the One standeth perpetually and is not moved.

Three then are they: "God, the Father and the Good", Cosmos and man.

God doth contain Cosmos; Cosmos [containeth] man. Cosmos is e'er God's Son, man as it were Cosmos' child.

15. Not that, however, God ignoreth man; nay, right well doth He know him, and willeth to be known.

This is the sole salvation for a man - God's Gnosis. This is the Way Up to the Mount.

By Him alone the soul becometh good, not whiles is good, whiles evil, but [good] out of necessity.

Tat: What dost thou mean, Thrice-greatest one?

Hermes: Behold an infant's soul, my son, that is not yet cut off, because its body is still small and not as yet come unto its full bulk.

Tat: How?

Hermes: A thing of beauty altogether is [such a soul] to see, not yet befouled by body's passions, still all but hanging from the Cosmic Soul!

But when the body grows in bulk and draweth down the soul into its mass, then doth the soul cut off itself and bring upon itself forgetfulness, and no more shareth in the Beautiful and the Good. And this forgetfulness becometh vice.

16. It is the same for them who go out from the body.

For when the soul withdraws into itself, the spirit doth contract itself within the blood, and the soul within the spirit. And then the mind, stripped of its wrappings, and naturally divine, taking unto itself a fiery body, doth traverse every space, after abandoning the soul unto its judgement and whatever chastisement it hath deserved.

Tat: What dost thou, father, mean by this? The mind is parted from soul and soul from spirit? Whereas thou said'st the soul was the mind's vesture, and the soul's the spirit.

17. Hermes: The hearer, son, should think with him who speaks and breathe with him; nay, he should have a hearing subtler than the voice of him who speaks.

It is, son, in a body made of earth that this arrangement of the vestures comes to pass. For in a body made of earth it is impossible the mind should take its seat itself by its own self in nakedness.

For neither is it possible on the one hand the earthly body should contain so much immortality, nor on the other that so great a virtue should endure a body passible in such close contact with it. It taketh, then, the soul for as it were an envelope.

And soul itself, being too and thing divine, doth use the spirit as its envelope, while spirit doth pervade the living creature.

18. When then the mind doth free itself from the earth-body, it straightway putteth on its proper robe of fire, with which it could not dwell in an earth-body.

For earth doth not bear fire; for it is all set in a blaze even by a small spark. And for this cause is water poured around earth, to be a guard and wall, to keep the blazing of the fire away.

But mind, the swiftest thing of all divine outthinkings, and swifter than all elements, hath for its body fire.

For mind being builder doth use the fire as tool for the construction of all things - the Mind of all [for the construction] of all things, but that of man only for things on earth.

Stript of its fire the mind on earth cannot make things divine, for it is human in its dispensation.

19. The soul in man, however - not every soul, but one that pious is - is a daimonic something and divine.

And such a soul when from the body freed, if it have fought the fight of piety - the fight of piety is to know God and to do wrong to no man - such a soul becomes entirely mind.

Whereas the impious soul remains in its own essence, chastised by its own self, and seeking for an earthly body where to enter, if only it be human.

For that no other body can contain a human soul; nor is it right that any human soul should fall into the body of a thing that doth possess no reason. For that the law of God is this: to guard the human soul from such tremendous outrage.

20. Tat: How father, then, is a man's soul chastised?

Hermes: What greater chastisement of any human soul can there be, son, than lack of piety? What fire has so fierce a flame as lack of piety? What ravenous beast so mauls the body as lack of piety the very soul?

Dost thou not see what hosts of ills the impious soul doth bear?

It shrieks and screams: I burn; I am ablaze; I know not what to cry or do; ah, wretched me, I am devoured by all the ills that compass me about; alack, poor me, I neither see nor hear!

Such are the cries wrung from a soul chastised; not, as the many think, and thou, son, dost suppose, that a [man's] soul, passing from body, is changed into a beast.

Such is a very grave mistake, for that the way a soul doth suffer chastisement is this:

21. When mind becomes a daimon, the law requires that it should take a fiery body to execute the services of God; and entering in the soul most impious it scourgeth it with whips made of its sins.

And then the impious soul, scourged with its sins, is plunged in murders, outrage, blasphemy, in violence of all kinds, and all the other things whereby mankind is wronged.

But on the pious soul the mind doth mount and guide it to the Gnosis' Light. And such a soul doth never tire in songs of praise [to God] and pouring blessing on all men, and doing good in word and deed to all, in imitation of its Sire.

22. Wherefore, my son, thou shouldst give praise to God and pray that thou mayst have thy mind Good Mind. It is, then, to a better state the soul doth pass; it cannot to a worse.

Further there is an intercourse of souls; those of the gods have intercourse with those of men, and those of men with souls of creatures which possess no reason.

The higher, further, have in charge the lower; the gods look after men, men after animals irrational, while God hath charge of all; for He is higher than them all and all are less than He.

Cosmos is subject, then, to God, man to the Cosmos, and irrationals to man. But God is o'er them all, and God contains them all.

God's rays, to use a figure, are His energies; the Cosmos's are natures, the arts and sciences are man's.

The energies act through the Cosmos, thence through the nature-rays of Cosmos upon man; the nature-rays [act] through the elements, man [acteth] through the sciences and

arts.

23. This is the dispensation of the universe, depending from the nature of the One, pervading [all things] through the Mind, than which is naught diviner nor of greater energy; and naught a greater means for the atoning men to gods and gods to men.

He, [Mind,] is the Good Daimon. Blessed the soul that is most filled with Him, and wretched is the soul that's empty of the Mind.

Tat: Father, what dost thou mean, again?

Hermes: Dost think then, son, that every soul hath the Good [Mind]? For 'tis of Him we speak, not of the mind in service of which we were just speaking, the mind sent down for [the soul's] chastisement.

24. For soul without the mind "can neither speak nor act". For oftentimes the mind doth leave the soul, and at that time the soul neither sees nor understands, but is just like a thing that hath no reason. Such is the power of mind.

Yet doth it not endure a sluggish soul, but leaveth such a soul tied to the body and bound tight down by it. Such soul, my son, doth not have Mind; and therefore such an one should not be called a man. For that man is a thing-of-life <or animal> divine; man is not measured with the rest of lives of things upon the earth, but with the lives above in heaven, who are called gods.

Nay more, if we must boldly speak the truth, the true "man" is e'en higher than the gods, or at the [very] least the gods and men are very whit in power each with the other equal.

25. For no one of the gods in heaven shall come down to the earth, o'er-stepping heaven's limit; whereas man doth mount up to heaven and measure it; he knows what things of it are high, what things are low, and learns precisely all things else besides. And greater thing than all; without e'en quitting earth, he doth ascend above. So vast a sweep doth he possess of ecstasy.

For this cause can a man dare say that man on earth is god subject to death, while god in heaven is man from death immune.

Wherefore the dispensation of all things is brought about by means of there, the twain - Cosmos and Man - but by the One.

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XI. Mind Unto Hermes

<This complex text is written as a revelation from the divine Mind - the "Man-Shepherd" of CH I - to Hermes, concerning the nature of God and the universe. Difficult enough in its own right, it has been made rather more so by some of Mead's most opaque prose. I have tried to insert clarifications where these are most needed.

<Some notes on terminology may also be useful. The term Aeon here, as in many of the

so-called “Gnostic” writings, refers to the timeless and spaceless realm of ideal being. The word cosmos means both “order” and “beauty” - the same root appears in the word “cosmetic”. Additionally, the words genesis and becoming in the translation are the same word in the Greek original.

<Finally, the word “inactive” in square brackets near the beginning of section 13 is Mead's, intended to fill a lacuna in the text. The more usual conjecture, as he comments, is “apart from God”. - JMG>

1. Mind: Master this sermon (logos), then, Thrice-greatest Hermes, and bear in mind the spoken words; and as it hath come unto Me to speak, I will no more delay.

Hermes: As many men say many things, and these diverse, about the All and Good, I have not learned the truth. Make it, then, clear to me, O Master mine! For I can trust the explanation of these things, which comes from Thee alone.

2. Mind: Hear [then], My son, how standeth God and All.

God; Aeon; Cosmos; Time; Becoming.

God maketh Aeon; Aeon, Cosmos; Cosmos, Time; and Time, Becoming <or Genesis>.

The Good - the Beautiful, Wisdom, Blessedness - is <the> essence, as it were, of God; of Aeon, <the essence is> Sameness; of Cosmos, Order; of Time, Change; and of Becoming, Life and Death.

The energies of God are Mind and Soul; of Aeon, lastingness and deathlessness; of Cosmos, restoration and the opposite thereof; of Time, increase and decrease; and of Becoming, quality.

Aeon is, then, in God; Cosmos, in Aeon; in Cosmos; Time; in Time, Becoming.

Aeon stands firm round God; Cosmos is moved in Aeon; Time hath its limits <or is accomplished> in the Cosmos; Becoming doth become in Time.

3. The source, therefore, of all is God; their essence, Aeon; their matter, Cosmos.

God's power is Aeon; Aeon's work is Cosmos - which never hath become, yet ever doth become by Aeon.

Therefore will Cosmos never be destroyed, for Aeon's indestructible; nor doth a whit of things in Cosmos perish, for Cosmos is enwrapped by Aeon round on every side.

Hermes: But God's Wisdom - what is that?

Mind: The Good and Beautiful, and Blessedness, and Virtue's all, and Aeon.

Aeon, then, ordereth [Cosmos], imparting deathlessness and lastingness to matter.

4. For its beginning doth depend on Aeon, as Aeon doth on God.

Now Genesis <or Becoming> and Time, in Heaven and upon the Earth, are of two natures.

In Heaven they are unchangeable and indestructible, but on the Earth they're subject unto change and to destruction.

Further, the Aeon's soul is God; the Cosmos' soul is Aeon; the Earth's soul, Heaven.

And God <is> in Mind; and Mind, in Soul; and Soul, in Matter; and all of them through Aeon.

But all this Body, in which are all the bodies, is full of Soul; and Soul is full of Mind, and Mind of God.

It <i.e., Soul> fills it <i.e., the Body of the Cosmos> from within, and from without encircles it, making the All to live.

Without, this vast and perfect Life [encircles] Cosmos; within, it fills [it with] all lives; above, in Heaven, continuing in sameness; below, on Earth, changing becoming.

5. And Aeon doth preserve this [Cosmos], or by Necessity, or by Foreknowledge, or by Nature, or by whatever else a man supposes or shall suppose. And all is this - God energizing.

The Energy of God is Power that naught can e'er surpass, a Power with which no one can make comparison of any human thing at all, or any thing divine.

Wherefore, O Hermes, never think that aught of things above or things below is like to God, for thou wilt fall from truth. For naught is like to That which hath no like, and is Alone and One.

And do not ever think that any other can possibly possess His power; for what apart from Him is there of life, and deathlessness and change of quality? For what else should He make?

God's not inactive, since all things [then] would lack activity; for all are full of God.

But neither in the Cosmos anywhere, nor in aught else, is there inaction. For that "inaction" is a name that cannot be applied to either what doth make or what is made.

6. But all things must be made; both ever made, and also in accordance with the influence of every space.

For He who makes, is in them all; not stablished in some one of them, nor making one thing only, but making all.

For being Power, He energizeth in the things He makes and is not independent of them - although the things He makes are subject to Him.

Now gaze through Me upon the Cosmos that's now subject to thy sight; regard its Beauty carefully - Body in pure perfection, though one than which there's no more ancient one, ever in prime of life, and ever-young, nay, rather, in even fuller and yet fuller prime!

7. Behold, again, the seven subject Worlds; ordered by Aeon's order, and with their varied course full-filling Aeon!

[See how] all things [are] full of light, and nowhere [is there] fire; for 'tis the love and the blending of the contraries and the dissimilars that doth give birth to light down shining by the energy of God, the Father of all good, the Leader of all order, and Ruler of the seven world-orderings!

[Behold] the Moon, forerunner of them all, the instrument of nature, and the transmuter of its lower matter!

[Look at] the Earth set in the midst of All, foundation of the Cosmos Beautiful, feeder and nurse of things on Earth!

And contemplate the multitude of deathless lives, how great it is, and that of lives subject to death; and midway, between both, immortal [lives] and mortal, [see thou] the circling Moon.

8. And all are full of soul, and all are moved by it, each in its proper way; some round the Heaven, others around the Earth; [see] how the right [move] not unto the left, nor yet the left unto the right; nor the above below, nor the below above.

And that all there are subject unto Genesis, My dearest Hermes, thou hast no longer need to learn of Me. For that they bodies are, have souls, and they are moved.

But 'tis impossible for them to come together into one without some one to bring them [all] together. It must, then, be that such a one as this must be some one who's wholly One.

9. For as the many motions of them [all] are different, and as their bodies are not like, yet has one speed been ordered for them all, it is impossible that there should be two or more makers for them.

For that one single order is not kept among "the many"; but rivalry will follow of the weaker with the stronger, and they will strive.

And if the maker of the lives that suffer change and death, should be another <from the maker of the immortals>, he would desire to make the deathless ones as well; just as the maker of the deathless ones, [to make the lives] that suffer death.

But come! if there be two - if matter's one, and Soul is one, in whose hands would there be the distribution for the making? Again, if both of them have some of it, in whose hands may be the greater part?

10. But thus conceive it, then; that every living body doth consist of soul and matter, whether [that body be] of an immortal, or a mortal, or an irrational [life].

For that all living bodies are ensouled; whereas, upon the other hand, those that live not, are matter by itself.

And, in like fashion, Soul when in its self is, after its own maker, cause of life; but the cause of all life is He who makes the things that cannot die.

Hermes: How, then, is it that, first, lives subject to death are other than the deathless ones? And, next, how is it that Life which knows no death, and maketh deathlessness, doth not make animals immortal?

11. Mind: First, that there is some one who does these things, is clear; and, next, that He is also One, is very manifest. For, also, Soul is one, and Life is one, and Matter one.

Hermes: But who is He?

Mind: Who may it other be than the One God? Whom else should it beseem to put Soul into lives but God alone? One, then, is God.

It would indeed be most ridiculous, if when thou dost confess the Cosmos to be one, Sun one, Moon one, and Godhead one, thou shouldst wish God Himself to be some one or other of a number!

12. All things, therefore, He makes, in many [ways]. And what great thing is it for God to make life, soul, and deathlessness, and change, when thou [thyself] dost do so many things?

For thou dost see, and speak, and hear, and smell, and taste, and touch, and walk, and think, and breathe. And it is not one man who smells, another one who walks, another one who thinks, and [yet] another one who breathes. But one is he who doth all these.

And yet no one of these could be apart from God. For just as, should thou cease from these, thou wouldst no longer be a living thing, so also, should God cease from them (a thing not law to say), no longer is He God.

13. For if it hath been shown that no thing can [inactive] be, how much less God? For if there's aught he doth not make (if it be law to say), He is imperfect. But if He is not only

not inactive, but perfect [God], then He doth make all things.

Give thou thyself to Me, My Hermes, for a little while, and thou shalt understand more easily how that God's work is one, in order that all things may be - that are being made, or once have been, or that are going to be made. And this is, My beloved, Life; this is the Beautiful; this is the Good; this, God.

14. And if thou wouldst in practice understand [this work], behold what taketh place with thee desiring to beget. Yet this is not like unto that, for He doth not enjoy.

For that indeed He hath no other one to share in what He works, for working by Himself, He ever is at work, Himself being what He doth. For did He separate Himself from it, all things would [then] collapse, and all must die, Life ceasing.

But if all things are lives, and also Life is one; then, one is God. And, furthermore, if all are lives, both those in Heaven and those on Earth, and One Life in them all is made to be by God, and God is it <i.e., God is the One Life> - then, all are made by God.

Life is the making-one of Mind and Soul; accordingly Death is not the destruction of those that are at-oned, but the dissolving of their union.

15. Aeon, moreover, is God's image; Cosmos [is] Aeon's; the Sun, of Cosmos; and Man, [the image] of the Sun.

The people call change death, because the body is dissolved, and life, when it's dissolved, withdraws to the unmanifest. But in this sermon (logos), Hermes, My beloved, as thou dost hear, I say the Cosmos also suffers change - for that a part of it each day is made to be in the unmanifest - yet it is ne'er dissolved.

These are the passions of the Cosmos - revolvings and concealments; revolving is conversion and concealment renovation.

16. The Cosmos is all-formed - not having forms external to itself, but changing them itself within itself. Since, then, Cosmos is made to be all-formed, what may its maker be? For that, on the one hand, He should not be void of all form; and, on the other hand, if He's all-formed, He will be like the Cosmos. Whereas, again, has He a single form, He will thereby be less than Cosmos.

What, then, say we He is? - that we may not bring round our sermon (logos) into doubt; for naught that mind conceives of God is doubtful.

He, then, hath one idea, which is His own alone, which doth not fall beneath the sight, being bodiless, and [yet] by means of bodies manifesteth all [ideas]. And marvel not that there's a bodiless idea.

17. For it is like the form of reason (logos) and mountain-tops in pictures. For they appear to stand out strongly from the rest, but really are quite smooth and flat.

And now consider what is said more boldly, but more truly!

Just as man cannot live apart from Life, so neither can God live without [His] doing good. For this is as it were the life and motion as it were of God - to move all things and make them live.

18. Now some of the things said should bear a sense peculiar to themselves. So understand, for instance, what I'm going to say.

All are in God, [but] not as lying in a place. For place is both a body and immovable, and things that lie do not have motion.

Now things lie one way in the bodiless, another way in being made manifest.

Think, [then,] of Him who doth contain them all; and think, that than the bodiless naught is more comprehensive, or swifter, or more potent, but it is the most comprehensive, the swiftest, and most potent of them all.

19. And, thus, think from thyself, and bid thy soul go unto any land, and there more quickly than thy bidding will it be. And bid it journey oceanwards; and there, again, immediately 'twill be, not as if passing on from place to place, but as if being there.

And bid it also mount to heaven; and it will need no wings, nor will aught hinder it, nor fire of sun, nor aether, nor vortex-swirl, nor bodies of the other stars; but, cutting through them all, it will soar up to the last Body [of them all]. And shouldst thou will to break through this as well, and contemplate what is beyond - if there be aught beyond the Cosmos; it is permitted thee.

20. Behold what power, what swiftness, thou dost have! And canst thou do all of these things, and God not [do them]?

Then, in this way know God; as having all things in Himself as thoughts, the whole Cosmos itself.

If, then, thou dost not make thyself like unto God, thou canst not know Him. For like is knowable unto like [alone].

Make, [then,] thyself to grow to the same stature as the Greatness which transcends all measure; leap forth from every body; transcend all time; become Eternity <literally, Aeon>; and [thus] shalt thou know God.

Conceiving nothing is impossible unto thyself, think thyself deathless and able to know all - all arts, all sciences, the way of every life.

Become more lofty than all height, and lower than all depth. Collect into thyself all senses of [all] creatures - of fire, [and] water, dry and moist. Think that thou art at the

same time in every place - in earth, in sea, in sky; not yet begotten, in the womb, young, old, [and] dead, in after-death conditions.

And if thou knowest all these things at once - times, places, doings, qualities, and quantities; thou canst know God.

21. But if thou lockest up thy soul within thy body, and dost debase it, saying: I nothing know; I nothing can; I fear the sea; I cannot scale the sky; I know not who I was, who I shall be - what is there [then] between [thy] God and thee?

For thou canst know naught of things beautiful and good so long as thou dost love thy body and art bad.

The greatest bad there is, is not to know God's Good; but to be able to know [Good], and will, and hope, is a Straight Way, the Good's own [Path], both leading there and easy.

If thou but settest thy foot thereon, 'twill meet thee everywhere, 'twill everywhere be seen, both where and when thou dost expect it not - waking, sleeping, sailing, journeying, by night, by day, speaking, [and] saying naught. For there is naught that is not image of the Good.

22. Hermes: Is God unseen?

Mind: Hush! Who is more manifest than He? For this one reason hath He made all things, that through them all thou mayest see Him.

This is the Good of God, this [is] His Virtue - that He may be manifest through all.

For naught's unseen, even of things that are without a body. Mind sees itself in thinking, God in making.

So far these things have been made manifest to thee, Thrice-greatest one! Reflect on all the rest in the same way with thyself, and thou shalt not be led astray.

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XII. About The Common Mind

<The “common mind” discussed in this dialogue is the same Mind which appears as a divine power in other parts of the Hermetic literature. It is identical, as well, with the “Good Daimon” whose words are quoted at several points here and elsewhere.

<The Greek word logos - which means both “word” and “reason”, among other things - is central to much of the argument, and it's unfortunate that English has no way to express the same complex of meanings. The praise of reason in parts 13-14 is also, and equally, a praise of human language, and this sort of double meaning plays a part elsewhere in this and other parts of the Hermetic literature. - JMG>

1. Hermes: The Mind, O Tat, is of God's very essence - (if such a thing as essence of God there be) - and what that is, it and it only knows precisely.

The Mind, then, is not separated off from God's essentiality, but is united to it, as light to sun.

This Mind in men is God, and for this cause some of mankind are gods, and their humanity is nigh unto divinity.

For the Good Daimon said: “Gods are immortal men, and men are mortal gods.”

2. But in irrational lives Mind is their nature. For where is Soul, there too is Mind; just as where Life, there is there also Soul.

But in irrational lives their soul is life devoid of mind; for Mind is the in-worker of the souls of men for good - He works on them for their own good.

In lives irrational He doth co-operate with each one's nature; but in the souls of men He counteracteth them.

For every soul, when it becomes embodied, is instantly depraved by pleasure and by pain.

For in a compound body, just like juices, pain and pleasure seethe, and into them the soul, on entering in, is plunged.

3. O'er whatsoever souls the Mind doth, then, preside, to these it showeth its own light, by acting counter to their prepossessions, just as a good physician doth upon the body prepossessed by sickness, pain inflict, burning or lancing it for sake of health.

In just the selfsame way the Mind inflicteth pain on the soul, to rescue it from pleasure, whence comes its every ill.

The great ill of the soul is godlessness; then followeth fancy for all evil things and nothing good.

So, then, Mind counteracting it doth work good on the soul, as the physician health upon the body.

4. But whatsoever human souls have not the Mind as pilot, they share in the same fate as souls of lives irrational.

For [Mind] becomes co-worker with them, giving full play to the desires toward which [such souls] are borne - [desires] that from the rush of lust strain after the irrational; [so that such human souls,] just like irrational animals, cease not irrationally to rage and

lust, nor are they ever satiate of ills.

For passions and irrational desires are ills exceeding great; and over these God hath set up the Mind to play the part of judge and executioner.

5. Tat: In that case, father mine, the teaching (logos) as to Fate, which previously thou didst explain to me, risks to be overset.

For that if it be absolutely fated for a man to fornicate, or commit sacrilege, or do some other evil deed, why is he punished - when he hath done the deed from Fate's necessity?

Hermes: All works, my son, are Fate's; and without Fate naught of things corporal - or <i.e., either> good, or ill - can come to pass.

But it is fated, too, that he who doeth ill, shall suffer. And for this cause he doth it - that he may suffer what he suffereth, because he did it.

6. But for the moment, [Tat,] let be the teaching as to vice and Fate, for we have spoken of these things in other [of our sermons]; but now our teaching (logos) is about the Mind: - what Mind can do, and how it is [so] different - in men being such and such, and in irrational lives [so] changed; and [then] again that in irrational lives it is not of a beneficial nature, while that in men it quencheth out the wrathful and the lustful elements.

Of men, again, we must class some as led by reason, and others as unreasoning.

7. But all men are subject to Fate, and genesis and change, for these are the beginning and the end of Fate.

And though all men do suffer fated things, those led by reason (those whom we said Mind doth guide) do not endure <a> like suffering with the rest; but, since they've freed themselves from viciousness, not being bad, they do not suffer bad.

Tat: How meanest thou again, my father? Is not the fornicator bad; the murderer bad; and [so with] all the rest?

Hermes: [I meant not that,] but that the Mind-led man, my son, though not a fornicator, will suffer just as though he had committed fornication, and though he be no murderer, as though he had committed murder.

The quality of change he can no more escape than that of genesis.

But it is possible for one who hath the Mind, to free himself from vice.

8. Wherefore I've ever heard, my son, Good Daimon also say - (and had He set it down in written words, He would have greatly helped the race of men; for He alone, my son, doth truly, as the Firstborn God, gazing on all things, give voice to words (logoi) divine) - yea, once I heard Him say:

"All things are one, and most of all the bodies which the mind alone perceives. Our life is owing to [God's] Energy and Power and Aeon. His Mind is good, so is His Soul as well. And this being so, intelligible things know naught of separation. So, then, Mind, being Ruler of all things, and being Soul of God, can do whate'er it wills."

9. So do thou understand, and carry back this word (logos) unto the question thou didst ask before - I mean about Mind's Fate.

For if thou dost with accuracy, son, eliminate [all] captious arguments (logoi), thou wilt

discover that of very truth the Mind, the Soul of God, doth rule o'er all - o'er Fate, and Law, and all things else; and nothing is impossible to it - neither o'er Fate to set a human soul, nor under Fate to set [a soul] neglectful of what comes to pass. Let this so far suffice from the Good Daimon's most good [words].

Tat: Yea, [words] divinely spoken, father mine, truly and helpfully. But further still explain me this.

10. Thou said'st that Mind in lives irrational worked in them as [their] nature, co-working with their impulses.

But impulses of lives irrational, as I do think, are passions.

Now if the Mind co-worketh with [these] impulses, and if the impulses of [lives] irrational be passions, then is Mind also passion, taking its color from the passions.

Hermes: Well put, my son! Thou questionest right nobly, and it is just that I as well should answer [nobly].

11. All things incorporeal when in a body are subject unto passion, and in the proper sense they are [themselves] all passions.

For every thing that moves itself is incorporeal; while every thing that's moved is body.

Incorporeals are further moved by Mind, and movement's <i.e., movement is> passion.

Both, then, are subject unto passion - both mover and the moved, the former being ruler and the latter ruled.

But when a man hath freed himself from body, then is he also freed from passion.

But, more precisely, son, naught is impassible, but all are passible.

Yet passion differeth from passibility; for that the one is active, while the other's passive.

Incorporeals moreover act upon themselves, for either they are motionless or they are moved; but whichsoever it be, it's passion.

But bodies are invariably acted on, and therefore they are passible.

Do not, then, let terms trouble thee; action and passion are both the selfsame thing. To use the fairer sounding term, however, does no harm.

12. Tat: Most clearly hast thou, father mine, set forth the teaching (logos).

Hermes: Consider this as well, my son; that these two things God hath bestowed on man beyond all mortal lives - both mind and speech (logos) equal to immortality. He hath the mind for knowing God and uttered speech (logos) for eulogy of Him.

And if one useth these for what he ought, he'll differ not a whit from the immortals. Nay, rather, on departing from the body, he will be guided by the twain unto the Choir of Gods and Blessed Ones.

13. Tat: Why, father mine! - do not the other lives make use of speech (logos)?

Hermes: Nay, son; but <i.e., only> use of voice; speech is far different from voice. For speech is general among all men, while voice doth differ in each class of living thing.

Tat: But with men also, father mine, according to each race, speech differs.

Hermes: Yea, son, but man is one; so also speech is one and is interpreted, and it is found the same in Egypt, and in Persia, and in Greece.

Thou seemest, son, to be in ignorance of Reason's (Logos) worth and greatness. For that the Blessed God, Good Daimon, hath declared:

"Soul is in Body, Mind in Soul; but Reason (Logos) is in Mind, and Mind in God; and

God is Father of [all] these."

14. The Reason, then, is the Mind's image, and Mind God's [image]; while Body is [the image] of the Form; and Form [the image] of the Soul.

The subtlest part of Matter is, then, Air <or vital spirit>; of Air, Soul; of Soul, Mind; and of Mind, God.

And God surroundeth all and permeateth all; while Mind Surroundeth Soul, Soul Air, Air Matter.

Necessity and Providence and Nature are instruments of Cosmos and of Matter's ordering; while of intelligible things each is Essence, and Sameness is their Essence. But of the bodies of the Cosmos each is many; for through possessiong Sameness, [these] composed bodies, though they do change from one into another of themselves, do natheless keep the incorruption of their Sameness.

15. Whereas in all the rest of composed bodies, of each there is a certain number; for without number structure cannot be, or composition, or decomposition.

Now it is units that give birth to number and increase it, and, being decomposed, are taken back again into themselves.

Matter is one; and this whole Cosmos - the mighty God and image of the mightier One, both with Him unified, and the conservor of the Will and Order of the Father - is filled full of Life.

Naught is there in it throughout the whole of Aeon, the Father's [everlasting]

Re-establishment - nor of the whole, nor of the parts - which doth not live.

For not a single thing that's dead, hath been, or is, or shall be in [this] Cosmos.

For that the Father willed it should have Life as long as it should be. Wherefore it needs must be a God.

16. How then, O son, could there be in the God, the image of the Father, in the plenitude of Life - dead things?

For that death is corruption, and corruption destruction.

How then could any part of that which knoweth no corruption be corrupted, or any whit of him the God destroyed?

Tat: Do they not, then, my father, die - the lives in it, that are its parts?

Hermes: Hush, son! - led into error by the term in use for what takes place.

They do not die, my son, but are dissolved as compound bodies.

Now dissolution is not death, but dissolution of a compound; it is dissolved not so that it may be destroyed, but that it may become renewed.

For what is the activity of life? Is it not motion? What then in Cosmos is there that hath no motion? Naught is there, son!

17. Tat: Doth not Earth even, father, seem to thee to have no motion?

Hermes: Nay, son; but rather that she is the only thing which, though in very rapid motion, is also stable.

For how would it not be a thing to laugh at, that the Nurse of all should have no motion, when she engenders and brings forth all things?

For 'tis impossible that without motion one who doth engender, should do so.

That thou should ask if the fourth part <or element> is not inert, is most ridiculous; for

the body which doth have no motion, gives sign of nothing but inertia.

18. Know, therefore, generally, my son, that all that is in Cosmos is being moved for increase or for decrease.

Now that which is kept moving, also lives; but there is no necessity that that which lives, should be all same.

For being simultaneous, the Cosmos, as a whole, is not subject to change, my son, but all its parts are subject unto it; yet naught [of it] is subject to corruption, or destroyed.

It is the terms employed that confuse men. For 'tis not genesis that constituteth life, but 'tis sensation; it is not change that constituteth death, but 'tis forgetfulness.

Since, then, these things are so, they are immortal all - Matter, [and] Life, [and] Spirit, Mind [and] Soul, of which whatever liveth, is composed.

19. Whatever then doth live, oweth its immortality unto the Mind, and most of all doth man, he who is both recipient of God, and co-essential with Him.

For with this life alone doth God consort; by visions in the night, by tokens in the day, and by all things doth He foretell the future unto him - by birds, by inward parts, by wind, by tree.

Wherefore doth man lay claim to know things past, things present and to come.

20. Observe this too, my son; that each one of the other lives inhabiteth one portion of the Cosmos - aquatic creatures water, terrene earth, and aery creatures air; while man doth use all these - earth, water air [and] fire; he seeth Heaven, too, and doth contact it with [his] sense.

But God surroundeth all, and permeateth all, for He is energy and power; and it is nothing difficult, my son, to conceive God.

21. But if thou wouldst Him also contemplate, behold the ordering of the Cosmos, and [see] the orderly behavior of its ordering <this is a play on the word "cosmos", which means "order, arrangement">; behold thou the Necessity of things made manifest, and [see] the Providence of things become and things becoming; behold how Matter is all-full of Life; [behold] this so great God in movement, with all the good and noble [ones] - gods, daimones and men!

Tat: But these are purely energies, O father mine!

Hermes: If, then, they're purely energies, my son - by whom, then, are they energized except by God?

Or art thou ignorant, that just as Heaven, Earth, Water, Air, are parts of Cosmos, in just the selfsame way God's parts are Life and Immortality, [and] Energy, and Spirit, and Necessity, and Providence, and Nature, Soul, and Mind, and the Duration <that is, Aeon or Eternity> of all these that is called Good?

And there are naught of things that have become, or are becoming, in which God is not.

22. Tat: Is He in Matter, father, then?

Hermes: Matter, my son, is separate from God, in order that thou may'st attribute to it the quality of space. But what thing else than mass think'st thou it is, if it's not energized? Whereas if it be energized, by whom is it made so? For energies, we said, are parts of God.

By whom are, then, all lives enlivened? By whom are things immortal made immortal?
By whom changed things made changeable?
And whether thou dost speak of Matter, of Body, or of Essence, know that these too are
energies of God; and that materiality is Matter's energy, that corporeality is Bodies'
energy, and that essentiality doth constituteth the energy of Essence; and this is God -
the All.

23. And in the All is naught that is not God. Wherefore nor <i.e., neither> size, nor
space, nor quality, nor form, nor time, surroundeth God; for He is All, and All
surroundeth all, and permeateth all.
Unto this Reason (Logos), son, thy adoration and thy worship pay. There is one way
alone to worship God; [it is] not to be bad.

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XIII. The Secret Sermon on the Mountain

<This dialogue is in many ways the culmination of the whole Corpus, summing up the theory of the Hermetic system at the same time as it provides an intriguing glimpse at the practice. The focus of the dialogue is the experience of Rebirth, which involves the replacement of twelve Tormentors within the self by ten divine Powers, leading to the awakening of knowledge of the self and God.

<The "Secret Hymnody" (sections 17-20) is presented as a litany for worship, to be performed twice each day, at sunrise and sunset. It's interesting to note that while the sunrise worship is performed facing east, the sunset worship is done to the south; Egyptian tradition from Pharaonic times onward saw the west as the direction of death.

<The usual difficulties with the multiple meanings of the Greek word logos appear in the translation, compounded by Mead's awkward style. Additionally, one of Mead's few evasions can be found in section 12, where he relates the twelve Tormentors to the "twelve types-of-life". This should more simply, and more accurately, have been translated as "the twelve signs of the Zodiac". The Theosophical distaste for astrology may well have been involved here. - JMG>

1. Tat: [Now] in the General Sermons, father, thou didst speak in riddles most unclear, conversing on Divinity; and when thou saidst no man could e'er be saved before Rebirth, thy meaning thou didst hide.

Further, when I became thy Suppliant, in Wending up the Mount, after thou hadst conversed with me, and when I longed to learn the Sermon (Logos) on Rebirth (for this beyond all other things is just the thing I know not), thou saidst, that thou wouldst give it me - "when thou shalt have become a stranger to the world".

Wherefore I got me ready and made the thought in me a stranger to the world-illusion.

And now do thou fill up the things that fall short in me with what thou saidst would give me the tradition of Rebirth, setting it forth in speech or in the secret way.

I know not, O Thrice-greatest one, from out what matter and what womb Man comes to birth, or of what seed.

2. Hermes: Wisdom that understands in silence [such is the matter and the womb from out which Man is born], and the True Good the seed.

Tat: Who is the sower, father? For I am altogether at a loss.

Hermes: It is the Will of God, my son.

Tat: And of what kind is he that is begotten, father? For I have no share of that essence in me, which doth transcend the senses. The one that is begot will be another one from God, God's Son?

Hermes: All in all, out of all powers composed.

Tat: Thou tellest me a riddle, father, and dost not speak as father unto son.

Hermes: This Race, my son, is never taught; but when He willeth it, its memory is restored by God.

3. Tat: Thou sayest things impossible, O father, things that are forced. Hence answers would I have direct unto these things. Am I a son strange to my father's race?

Keep it not, father, back from me. I am a true-born son; explain to me the manner of Rebirth.

Hermes: What may I say, my son? I can but tell thee this. Whene'er I see within myself the Simple Vision brought to birth out of God's mercy, I have passed through myself into a Body that can never die. And now I am not as I was before; but I am born in Mind.

The way to do this is not taught, and it cannot be seen by the compounded element by means of which thou seest.

Yea, I have had my former composed form dismembered for me. I am no longer touched, but I have touch; I have dimension too; and [yet] am I a stranger to them now.

Thou seest me with eyes, my son; but what I am thou dost not understand [even] with fullest strain of body and of sight.

4. Tat: Into fierce frenzy and mind-fury hast thou plunged me, father, for now no longer do I see myself.

Hermes: I would, my son, that thou hadst e'en passed right through thyself, as they who dream in sleep yet sleepless.

Tat: Tell me this too! Who is the author of Rebirth?

Hermes: The Son of God, the One Man, by God's Will.

5. Tat: Now hast thou brought me, father, unto pure stupefaction. Arrested from the senses which I had before,...<lacuna in original text>; for [now] I see thy Greatness identical with thy distinctive form.

Hermes: Even in this thou art untrue; the mortal form doth change with every day. 'Tis turned by time to growth and waning, as being an untrue thing.

6. Tat: What then is true, Thrice-greatest One?

Hermes: That which is never troubled, son, which cannot be defined; that which no color hath, nor any figure, which is not turned, which hath no garment, which giveth light; that which is comprehensible unto itself [alone], which doth not suffer change; that which no body can contain.

Tat: In very truth I lose my reason, father. Just when I thought to be made wise by thee, I find the senses of this mind of mine blocked up.

Hermes: Thus is it, son: That which is upward borne like fire, yet is borne down like earth, that which is moist like water, yet blows like air, how shalt thou this perceive with sense - the that which is not solid nor yet moist, which naught can bind or loose, of which in power and energy alone can man have any notion - and even then it wants a man who can perceive the Way of Birth in God?

7. Tat: I am incapable of this, O father, then?

Hermes: Nay, God forbid, my son! Withdraw into thyself, and it will come; will, and it comes to pass; throw out of work the body's senses, and thy Divinity shall come to birth; purge from thyself the brutish torments - things of matter.

Tat: I have tormentors then in me, O father?

Hermes: Ay, no few, my son; nay, fearful ones and manifold.

Tat: I do not know them, father.

Hermes: Torment the first is this Not-knowing, son; the second one is Grief; the third, Intemperance; the fourth, Concupiscence; the fifth, Unrighteousness; the sixth is Avarice; the seventh, Error; the eighth is Envy; the ninth, Guile; the tenth is Anger; eleventh, Rashness; the twelfth is Malice.

These are in number twelve; but under them are many more, my son; and creeping through the prison of the body they force the man that's placed therein to suffer in his senses. But they depart (though not all at once) from him who hath been taken pity on by God; and this it is which constitutes the manner of Rebirth. And... <lacuna in the original text> the Reason (Logos).

8. And now, my son, be still and solemn silence keep! Thus shall the mercy that flows on us from God not cease.

Henceforth rejoice, O son, for by the Powers of God thou art being purified for the articulation of the Reason (Logos).

Gnosis of God hath come to us, and when this comes, my son, Not-knowing is cast out.

Gnosis of Joy hath come to us, and on its coming, son, Sorrow will flee away to them who give it room. The Power that follows Joy do I invoke, thy Self-control. O Power most sweet! Let us most gladly bid it welcome, son! How with its coming doth it chase Intemperance away!

9. Now fourth, on Continnence I call, the Power against Desire. <lacuna in the original text> This step, my son, is Righteousness' firm seat. For without judgement <other translators read this "without effort"> see how she hath chased Unrighteousness away. We are made righteous, son, by the departure of Unrighteousness.

Power sixth I call to us - that against Avarice, Sharing-with-all.

And now that Avarice is gone, I call on Truth. And Error flees, and Truth is with us.

See how [the measure of] the Good is full, my son, upon Truth's coming. For Envy is gone from us; and unto Truth is joined the Good as well, with Life and Light.

And now no more doth any torment of the Darkness venture nigh, but vanquished [all] have fled with whirring wings.

10. Thou knowest [now], my son, the manner of Rebirth. And when the Ten is come, my son, that driveth out the Twelve, the Birth in understanding <literally "intellectual birth", noera genesis> is complete, and by this birth we are made into Gods.

Who then doth by His mercy gain this Birth in God, abandoning the body's senses, knows himself [to be of Light and Life] and that he doth consist of these, and [thus] is filled with bliss.

11. Tat: By God made steadfast, father, no longer with the sight my eyes afford I look on things, but with the energy the Mind doth give me through the Powers.

In Heaven am I, in earth, in water, air; I am in animals, in plants; I'm in the womb, before the womb, after the womb; I'm everywhere!

But further tell me this: How are the torments of the Darkness, when they are twelve in number, driven out by the ten Powers? What is the way of it, Thrice-greatest one?

12. Hermes: This dwelling-place through which we have just passed <i.e., the human body>, my son, is constituted from the circle of the twelve types-of-life, this being composed of elements, twelve in number, but of one nature, an omniform idea. For man's delusion there are disunions in them, son, while in their action they are one. Not only can we never part Rashness from Wrath; they cannot even be distinguished.

According to right reason (logos), then, they <the Twelve> naturally withdraw once and for all, in as much as they are chased out by no less than ten powers, that is, the Ten.

For, son, the Ten is that which giveth birth to souls. And Life and Light are unified there, where the One hath being from the Spirit. According then to reason (logos) the One contains the Ten, the Ten the One.

13. Tat: Father, I see the All, I see myself in Mind.

Hermes: This is, my son, Rebirth - no more to look on things from body's view-point (a thing three ways in space extended)... <lacuna in text>, though this Sermon (Logos) on Rebirth, on which I did not comment - in order that we may not be calumniators of the All unto the multitude, to whom indeed God Himself doth will we should not.

14. Tat: Tell me, O father: This Body which is made up of the Powers, is it at any time dissolved?

Hermes: Hush, [son]! Speak not of things impossible, else wilt thou sin and thy Mind's eye be quenched.

The natural body which our sense perceives is far removed from this essential birth.

The first must be dissolved, the last can never be; the first must die, the last death cannot touch.

Dost thou not know thou hast been born a God, Son of the One, even as I myself?

15. Tat: I would, O father, hear the Praise-giving with hymn which thou didst say thou heardest then when thou wert at the Eight [the Ogdoad] of Powers

Hermes: Just as the Shepherd did foretell [I should], my son, [when I came to] the Eight.

Well dost thou haste to "strike thy tent" <i.e., be free from the physical body>, for thou hast been made pure.

The Shepherd, Mind of all masterhood, hath not passed on to me more than hath been written down, for full well did he know that I should of myself be able to learn all, and hear what I should wish, and see all things.

He left to me the making of fair things; wherefore the Powers within me. e'en as they are in all, break into song.

16. Tat: Father, I wish to hear; I long to know these things.

Hermes: Be still, my son; hear the Praise-giving now that keeps [the soul] in tune, Hymn of Re-birth - a hymn I would not have thought fit so readily to tell, had'st thou not reached the end of all.

Wherefore this is not taught, but is kept hid in silence.

Thus then, my son, stand in a place uncovered to the sky, facing the southern wind, about the sinking of the setting sun, and make thy worship; so in like manner too when he doth rise, with face to the east wind.

Now, son, be still!

The Secret Hymnody

17. Let every nature of the World receive the utterance of my hymn!

Open thou Earth! Let every bolt of the Abyss be drawn for me. Stir not, ye Trees!

I am about to hymn creation's Lord, both All and One.

Ye Heavens open and ye Winds stay still; [and] let God's deathless Sphere receive my word (logos)!

For I will sing the praise of Him who founded all; who fixed the Earth, and hung up Heaven, and gave command that Ocean should afford sweet water [to the Earth], to both those parts that are inhabited and those that are not, for the support and use of every man; who made the Fire to shine for gods and men for every act.

Let us together all give praise to Him, sublime above the Heavens, of every nature Lord!

'Tis He who is the Eye of Mind; may He accept the praise of these my Powers!

18. Ye powers that are within me, hymn the One and All; sing with my Will, Powers all that are within me!

O blessed Gnosis, by thee illumined, hymning through thee the Light that mond alone can see, I joy in Joy of Mind.

Sing with me praises all ye Powers!

Sing praise, my Self-control; sing thou through me, my Righteousness, the praises of the Righteous; sing thou, my Sharing-all, the praises of the All; through me sing, Truth, Truth's praises!

Sing thou, O Good, the Good! O Life and Light, from us to you our praises flow!

Father, I give Thee thanks, to Thee Thou Energy of all my Powers; I give Thee thanks, O God, Thou Power of all my Energies!

19. Thy Reason (Logos) sings through me Thy praises. Take back through me the All into [Thy] Reason - [my] reasonable oblation!

Thus cry the Powers in me. They sing Thy praise, Thou All; they do Thy Will.

From Thee Thy Will; to Thee the All. Receive from all their reasonable oblation. The All that is in us, O Life, preserve; O Light<,> illumine it; O God<,> in-spirit it.

It is Thy Mind that plays the shepherd to Thy Word, O Thou Creator, Bestower of the Spirit [upon all].

20. [For] Thou art God, Thy Man thus cries to Thee through Fire, through Air, through Earth, through Water, [and] through Spirit, through Thy creatures.

'Tis from Thy Aeon I have found praise-giving; and in thy Will, the object of my search, have I found rest.

Tat: By thy good pleasure have I seen this praise-giving being sung, O father; I have set it in my Cosmos too.

Hermes: Say in the Cosmos that thy mind alone can see, my son.

Tat: Yea, father, in the Cosmos that the mind alone can see; for I have been made able by thy Hymn, and by thy Praise-giving my mind hath been illumined. But further I myself as well would from my natural mind send praise-giving to God.

21. Hermes: But not unheedfully, my son.

Tat: Aye. What I behold in mind, that do I say.

To thee, thou Parent of my Bringing into Birth, as unto God I, Tat, send reasonable offerings. o God and Father, thou art the Lord, thou art the Mind. Receive from me oblations reasonable as thou would'st wish; for by thy Will all things have been perfected.

Hermes: Send thou oblation, son, acceptable to God, the Sire of all; but add, my son, too, "through the Word" (Logos).

Tat: I give thee, father, thanks for showing me to sing such hymns.

22. Hermes: Happy am I, my son, that though hast brought the good fruits forth of Truth, products that cannot die.

And now that thou hast learnt this lesson from me, make promise to keep silence on thy virtue, and to no soul, my son, make known the handing on to thee the manner of Rebirth, that we may not be thought to be calumniators.

And now we both of us have given heed sufficiently, both I the speaker and the hearer thou.

In Mind hast thou become a Knower of thyself and our [common] Sire.

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XIV. [A Letter] of Thrice-Greatest Hermes to Asclepius

Unto Asclepius Good Health of Soul!

1. Since in thy absence my son Tat desired to learn the nature of the things that are, and would not let me hold it over, as [natural to] a younger son fresh come to gnosis of the [teachings] on each single point,—I was compelled to tell [him] more, in order that the contemplation [of them] might be the easier for him to follow.

I would, then, choosing out the chiefest heads of what was said, write them in brief to thee, explaining them more mysticly, as unto one of greater age and one well versed in Nature.

2. If all things manifest have been and are being made, and made things are not made by their own selves but by another; [if] made things are the many,—nay more, are all things manifest and all things different and not alike; and things that are being made are being made by other [than themselves];—there is some one who makes these things; and He cannot be made, but is more ancient than the things that can.

For things that can be made, I say, are made by other [than themselves]; but of the things that owe their being to their being made, it is impossible that anything should be more ancient than them all, save only That which is not able to be made.

3. So He is both Supreme, and One, and Only, the truly wise in all, as having naught more ancient [than Himself].

For He doth rule o'er both the number, size and difference of things that are being made, and o'er the continuity of their making [too].

Again, things makeable are seeable; but He cannot be seen.

For for this cause He maketh,—that He may not be able to be seen.

He, therefore, ever maketh; and therefore can He ne'er be seen.

To comprehend Him thus is meet; and comprehending, [it is meet] to marvel; and marvelling, to count oneself as blessed, as having learnt to know one's Sire.

4. For what is sweeter than one's own true Sire? Who, then, is He; and how shall we learn how to know Him?

Is it not right to dedicate to Him alone the name of God, or that of Maker, or of Father, or rather [all] the three;—God for His Power, and Maker for His Energy, and Father for His Good?

Now Power doth differ from the things which are being made; while Energy consisteth in all things being made.

Wherefore we ought to put away verbosity and foolish talk, and understand these two—the made and Maker. For that of them there is no middle [term]; there is no third.

5. Wherefore in all that thou conceivest, in all thou nearest, these two recall to mind; and think all things are they, reckoning as doubtful naught, nor of the things above, nor of the things below, neither of things divine, nor things that suffer change or things that are in obscurity.

For all things are [these] twain, Maker and made, and 'tis impossible that one should be without the other; for neither is it possible that "Maker" should exist without the "made," for each of them is one and the same thing.

Wherefore 'tis no more possible for one from other to be parted, than self from self.

6. Now if the Maker is naught else but That which makes, Alone, Simple, Uncompound, it needs must do this [making] to Itself,—to Which its Maker's making is "its being made."

And as to all that's being made,—it cannot be [so made] by being made by its own self; but it must needs be made by being made by other. Without the "Maker" "made" is neither made nor is; for that the one without the other doth lose its proper nature by deprivation of that other.

If, then, all things have been admitted to be two,—the "that which is being made" and "that which makes,"—[all then] are one in union of these,—the "that which leadeth" and the "that which followeth."

The making God is "that which leadeth"; the "that which is being made," whatever it be, the "that which followeth."

7. And do not thou be chary of things made because of their variety, from fear of attribution of a low estate and lack of glory unto God.

For that His Glory's one,—to make all things; and this is as it were God's Body, the making [of them].

But by the Maker's self naught is there thought or bad or base.

These things are passions which accompany the making process, as rust doth brass and filth doth body; but neither doth the brass-smith make the rust, nor the begetters of the body filth, nor God [make] evil.

It is continuance in the state of being made that makes them lose, as though it were,

their bloom; and 'tis because of this God hath made change, as though it were the making clean of genesis.

8. Is it, then, possible for one and the same painter man to make both heaven, and gods, and earth, and sea, and men, and all the animals, and lifeless things, and trees, and yet impossible for God to make all things?

What monstrous lack of understanding; what want of knowledge as to God!

For such the strangest lot of all do suffer; for though they say they worship piously and sing the praise of God, yet by their not ascribing unto Him the making of all things, they know not God; and, added unto this not-knowing, they're guilty even of the worst impiety to Him—passions to Him attributing, or arrogance, or impotency.

For if He doth not make all things, from arrogance He doth not make, or not being able,—which is impiety [to think].

9. One Passion hath God only—Good; and He who's Good, is neither arrogant nor impotent.

For this is God—the Good, which hath all power of making all.

And all that can be made is made by God,—that is, by [Him who is] the Good and who can make all things.

But would'st thou learn how He doth make, and how things made are made, thou may'st do so.

10. Behold a very fair and most resemblant image—a husbandman casting the seed into the ground; here wheat, there barley, and there [again] some other of the seeds!

Behold one and the same man planting the vine, the apple, and [all] other trees!

In just the selfsame way doth God sow Immortality in Heaven, and Change on Earth, and Life and Motion in the universe.

These are not many, but few and easy to be numbered; for four in all are they,—and God Himself and Genesis, in whom are all that are.

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XV. The Definitions of Asclepius unto King Ammon

The Perfect Sermon of Asclepius unto the King

1. Great is the sermon (logos) which I send to thee, O King—the summing up and digest, as it were, of all the rest.

For it is not composed to suit the many's prejudice, since it contains much that refuteth them.

Nay, it will seem to thee as well to contradict sometimes my sermons too.

Hermes, my master, in many a conversation, both when alone, and sometimes, too, when Tat was there, has said, that unto those who come across my books, their composition will seem most simple and [most] clear; but, on the contrary, as 'tis unclear, and has the [inner] meaning of its words concealed, it will be still unclearer, when, afterwards, the Greeks will want to turn our tongue into their own,—for this will be a very great distorting and obscuring of [even] what has been [already] written.

2. Turned into our own native tongue, the sermon (logos) keepeth clear the meaning of the words (logoi) [at any rate].

For that its very quality of sound, the [very] power of the Egyptian names, have in themselves the bringing into act of what is said.

As far as, then, thou canst, O King—(and thou canst [do] all things)—keep [this] our sermon from translation; in order that such mighty mysteries may not come to the Greeks, and the disdainful speech of Greece, with [all] its looseness, and its surface beauty, so to speak, take all the strength out of the solemn and the strong—the energetic speech of Names.

The Greeks, O King, have novel words, energetic of “argumentation” [only]; and thus is the philosophizing of the Greeks—the noise of words.

But we do not use words; but we use sounds full-filled with deeds.

3. Thus, then, will I begin the sermon by invocation unto God, the universals’ Lord and Maker, [their] Sire, and [their] Encompasser; who though being All is One, and though being One is All; for that the Fullness of all things is One, and [is] in One, this latter One not coming as a second [One], but both being One.

And this is the idea that I would have thee keep, through the whole study of our sermon, Sire!

For should one try to separate what seems to be both All and One and Same from One,—he will be found to take his epithet of “All” from [the idea of] multitude, and not from [that of] fullness—which is impossible; for if he part All from the One, he will destroy the All.

For all things must be One—if they indeed are One. Yea, they are One; and they shall never cease being One—in order that the Fullness may not be destroyed.

4. See then in Earth a host of founts of Water and of Fire forth-spirting in its midmost parts; in one and the same [space all] the three natures visible—of Fire, and Water, and of Earth, depending from one Root.

Whence, too, it is believed to be the Treasur of every matter. It sendeth forth of its abundance, and in the place [of what it sendeth forth] receiveth the subsistence from above.

For thus the Demiurge—I mean the Sun—eternally doth order Heaven and Earth, pouring down Essence, and taking Matter up, drawing both round Himself and to Himself all things, and from Himself giving all things to all.

For He it is whose goodly energies extend not only through the Heaven and the Air, but also onto Earth, right down unto the lowest Depth and the Abyss.

[5. missing]

6. And if there be an Essence which the mind alone can grasp, this is his Substance, the reservoir of which would be His Light.

But whence this [Substance] doth arise, or floweth forth, He, [and He] only, knows.

Or rather, in space and nature, He is near unto Himself . . . though as He is not seen by us, ... understand [Him] by conjecture.

7. The spectacle of Him, however, is not left unto conjecture; nay [for] His very rays, in greatest splendour, shine all round on all the Cosmos that doth lie above and lie below.

For He is stablished in the midst, wreathed with the Cosmos, and just as a good charioteer, He safely drives the cosmic team, and holds them in unto Himself, lest they should run away in dire disorder.

The reins are Life, and Soul, and Spirit, Deathlessness, and Genesis.

He lets it, then, drive [round] not far off from Himself—nay, if the truth be said, together with Himself.

8. And in this way He operates all things. To the immortals He distributeth perpetual permanence; and with the upper hemisphere of His own Light—all that he sends above from out His other side, [the side of him] which looks to Heaven—He nourisheth the deathless parts of Cosmos.

But with that side that sendeth down [its Light], and shineth round all of the hemisphere of Water, and of Earth, and Air, He vivifieth, and by births and changes keepeth in movement to and fro the animals in these [the lower] parts of Cosmos. ...

9. He changes them in spiral fashion, and doth transform them into one another, genus to genus, species into species, their mutual changes into one another being balanced—just as He does when He doth deal with the Great Bodies.

For in the case of every body, [its] permanence [consists in] transformation.

In case of an immortal one, there is no dissolution; but when it is a mortal one, it is accompanied with dissolution.

And this is how the deathless body doth differ from the mortal, and how the mortal one doth differ from the deathless.

10. Moreover, as His Light's continuous, so is His Power of giving Life to lives continuous, and not to be brought to an end in space or in abundance.

For there are many choirs of daimons round Him, like unto hosts of very various kinds; who though they dwell with mortals, yet are not far from the immortals; but having as their lot from here unto the spaces of the Gods, they watch o'er the affairs of men, and work out things appointed by the Gods—by means of storms, whirlwinds and hurricanes, by transmutations wrought by fire and shakings of the earth, with famines also and with wars requiting [man's] impiety,—for this is in man's case the greatest ill against the Gods.

11. For that the duty of the Gods is to give benefits; the duty of mankind is to give worship; the duty of the daimons is to give requital.

For as to all the other things men do, through error, or foolhardiness, or by necessity, which they call Fate, or ignorance—these are not held equitable among the Gods; impiety alone is guilty at their bar.

12. The Sun is the preserver and the nurse of every class.

And just as the Intelligible World, holding the Sensible in its embrace, fills it [all] full, distending it with forms of every kind and every shape—so, too, the Sun distendeth all in Cosmos, affording births to all, and strengtheneth them.

When they are weary or they fail, He takes them in His arms again.

13. And under Him is ranged the choir of daimons—or, rather, choirs; for these are multitudinous and very varied, ranked underneath the groups of Stars, in equal number with each one of them.

So, marshalled in their ranks, they are the ministers of each one of the Stars, being in their natures good, and bad, that is, in their activities (for that a daimon's essence is activity); while some of them are [of] mixed [natures], good and bad.

14. To all of these has been allotted the authority o'er things upon the Earth; and it is they who bring about the multifold confusion of the turmoils on the Earth—for states and nations generally, and for each individual separately.

For they do shape our souls like to themselves, and set them moving with them,—obsessing nerves, and marrow, veins and arteries, the brain itself, down to the very heart.

15. For on each one of us being born and made alive, the daimons take hold on us—those [daimones] who are in service at that moment [of the wheel] of Genesis, who are ranged under each one of the Stars.

For that these change at every moment; they do not stay the same, but circle back again.

These, then, descending through the body Bookmark this page on these social networks³ to the two parts Bookmark this page on these social networks⁴ of the soul, set it Bookmark this page on these social networks⁵ awhirling, each one towards its own activity.

But the soul's rational part is set above the lordship of the daimons—designed to be receptacle of God.

16. Who then doth have a Ray shining upon him through the Sun within his rational part—and these in all are few on them the daimons do not act; for no one of the daimons or of Gods has any power against one Ray of God.

As for the rest, they are all led and driven, soul and body, by the daimons—loving and hating the activities of these.

The reason (logos), [then,] is not the love that is deceived and that deceives.

The daimons, therefore, exercise the whole of this terrene economy, using our bodies as [their] instruments.

And this economy Hermes has called Heimarmenē.

17. The World Intelligible, then, depends from God; the Sensible from the Intelligible

[World].

The Sun, through the Intelligible and the Sensible Cosmos, pours forth abundantly the stream from God of Good,—that is, the demiurgic operation.

And round the Sun are the Eight Spheres, dependent from Him—the [Sphere] of the Non-wandering Ones, the Six [Spheres] of the Wanderers, and one Circumterrene.

And from the Spheres depend the daimones; and from these, men.

And thus all things and all [of them] depend from God.

18. Wherefore God is the Sire of all; the Sun's [their] Demiurge; the Cosmos is the instrument of demiurgic operation.

Intelligible Essence regulateth Heaven; and Heaven, the Gods; the daimones, ranked underneath the Gods, regulate men.

This is the host of Gods and daimones.

Through these God makes all things for His own self.

And all [of them] are parts of God; and if they all [are] parts—then, God is all.

Thus, making all, He makes Himself; nor ever can He cease [His making], for He Himself is ceaseless.

Just, then, as God doth have no end and no beginning, so doth His making have no end and no beginning.

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XVI. Of Asclepius to the King

Asclepius. If thou dost think [of it], O King, even of bodies there are things bodiless.

The King. What [are they]?—(asked the King.)

Asc. The bodies that appear in mirrors—do they not seem then to have no body?

The King. It is so, O Asclepius; thou thinkest like a God!—(the King replied.)

Asc. There are things bodiless as well as these; for instance, forms—do not they seem to thee to have no body, but to appear in bodies not only of the things which are ensouled, but also of those which are not ensouled?

The King. Thou sayest well, Asclepius.

Asc. Thus, [then,] there are reflexions of things bodiless on bodies, and of bodies too upon things bodiless—that is to say, [reflexions] of the Sensible on the Intelligible World, and of the [World] Intelligible on the Sensible.

Wherefore, pay worship to the images, O King, since they too have their forms as from the World Intelligible.

(Thereon His Majesty arose and said:)

The King. It is the hour, O Prophet, to see about the comfort of our guests. To-morrow, [then,] will we resume our sacred converse.

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XVII. The Encomium of Kings

(About the Soul's being Hindered by the Passion of the Body)

1. [Now] in the case of those professing the harmonious art of muse-like melody—if, when the piece is played, the discord of the instruments doth hinder their intent, its rendering becomes ridiculous.

For when his instruments are quite too weak for what's required of them, the

music-artist needs must be laughed at by the audience.

For He, with all good will, gives of His art unweariedly; they blame the [artist's] weakness.

He then who is the Natural Musician-God, not only in His making of the harmony of His [celestial] songs, but also in His sending forth the rhythm of the melody of His own song[s] right down unto the separate instruments, is, as God, never wearied.

For that with God there is no growing weary.

2. So, then, if ever a musician desires to enter into the highest contest of his art he can—when now the trumpeters have rendered the same phrase of the [composer's] skill, and afterwards the flautists played the sweet notes of the melody upon their instruments, and they complete the music of the piece with pipe and plectrum—[if any thing goes wrong,] one does not lay the blame upon the inspiration of the music-maker.

Nay, [by no means,]—to him one renders the respect that is his due; one blames the falseness of the instrument, in that it has become a hindrance to those who are most excellent—embarrassing the maker of the music in [the execution of] his melody, and robbing those who listen of the sweetness of the song.

3. In like way also, in our case, let no one of our audience for the weakness that inheres in body, blame impiously our Race.

Nay, let him know God is Unwearied Spirit—for ever in the self-same way possessed of His own science, unceasing in His joyous gifts, the self-same benefits bestowing everywhere.

4. And if the Pheidias—the Demiurge—is not responded to, by lack of matter to perfect His skilfulness, although for His own part the Artist has done all he can, let us not lay the blame on Him.

But let us, [rather,] blame the weakness of the string, in that, because it is too slack or is too tight, it mars the rhythm of the harmony.

5. So when it is that the mischance occurs by reason of the instrument, no one doth blame the Artist.

Nay, [more;] the worse the instrument doth chance to be, the more the Artist gains in reputation by the frequency with which his hand doth strike the proper note, and more the love the listeners pour upon that Music-maker, without the slightest thought of blaming him.

So will we too, most noble [Sirs], set our own lyre in tune again, within, with the Musician!

6. Nay, I have seen one of the artist-folk—although he had no power of playing on the lyre—when once he had been trained for the right noble theme, make frequent use of his own self as instrument, and tune the service of his string by means of mysteries, so that the listeners were amazed at how he turned necessity into magnificence.

Of course you know the story of the harper who won the favour of the God who is the president of music-work.

[One day,] when he was playing for a prize, and when the breaking of a string became a hindrance to him in the contest, the favour of the Better One supplied him with another string, and placed within his grasp the boon of fame.

A grasshopper was made to settle on his lyre, through the foreknowledge of the Better One, and [so] fill in the melody in substitution of the [broken] string.

And so by mending of his string the harper's grief was stayed, and fame of victory was won.

7. And this I feel is my own case, most noble [Sirs]!

For but just now I seemed to make confession of my want of strength, and play the weakling for a little while; but now, by virtue of the strength of [that] Superior One, as though my song about the King had been perfected [by Him, I seem] to wake my muse.

For, you must know, the end of [this] our duty will be the glorious fame of Kings, and the good-will of our discourse (logos) [will occupy itself] about the triumphs which they win.

Come then, let us make haste! For that the singer willeth it, and hath attuned his lyre for this; nay more, more sweetly will he play, more fitly will he sing, as he has for his song the greater subjects of his theme.

8. Since, then, he has the [stringing] of his lyre tuned specially to Kings, and has the key of laudatory songs, and as his goal the Royal praises, let him first raise himself unto the highest King—the God of wholes.

Beginning, [then,] his song from the above, he, [thus,] in second place, descends to those after His likeness who hold the sceptre's power; since Kings themselves, indeed, prefer the [topics] of the song should step by step descend from the above, and where they have their [gifts of] victory presided o'er for them, thence should their hopes be led in orderly succession.

9. Let, then, the singer start with God, the greatest King of wholes, who is for ever free from death, both everlasting and possessed of [all] the might of everlastingness, the Glorious Victor, the very first, from whom all victories descend to those who in succession do succeed to victory.

10. Our sermon (logos) then, doth hasten to descend to [Kingly] praises and to the Presidents of common weal and peace, the Kings—whose lordship in most ancient times was placed upon the highest pinnacle by God Supreme; for whom the prizes have already been prepared even before their prowess in the war; of whom the trophies have been raised even before the shock of conflict.

For whom it is appointed not only to be Kings but also to be best.

At whom, before they even stir, the foreign land doth quake.

(About the Blessing of the Better [One] and Praising of the King)

11. But now our theme (logos) doth hasten on to blend its end with its beginnings—with blessing of the Better [One]; and then to make a final end of its discourse (logos) on those divinest Kings who give us the [great] prize of peace.

For just as we began [by treating] of the Better [One] and of the Power Above, so let us make the end bend round again unto the same—the Better [One].

Just as the Sun, the nurse of all the things that grow, on his first rising, gathers unto himself the first-fruits of their yield with his most mighty hands, using his rays as though it were for plucking off their fruits—yea, [for] his rays are [truly] hands for him who plucketh first the most ambrosial [essences] of plants—so, too, should we, beginning from the Better [One], and [thus] recipient of His wisdom's stream, and turning it upon the garden of our souls above the heavens,—we should [direct and] train these [streams] of blessing back again unto their source, [blessing] whose entire power of germination [in us] He hath Himself poured into us.

12. 'Tis fit ten thousand tongues and voices should be used to send His blessings back

again unto the all-pure God, who is the Father of our souls; and though we cannot utter what is fit—for we are [far] unequal to the task—[yet will we say what best we can].

For Babes just born have not the strength to sing their Father's glory as it should be sung; but they give proper thanks for them, according to their strength, and meet with pardon for their feebleness.

Nay, it is rather that God's glory doth consist in this [one] very thing—that He is greater than His children; and that the prelude and the source, the middle and the end, of blessings, is to confess the Father to be infinitely puissant and never knowing what a limit means.

13. So is it, too, in the King's case.

For that we men, as though we were the children of the King, feel it our natural duty to give praise to him. Still must we ask for pardon [for our insufficiency], e'en though 'tis granted by our Sire before we [even] ask.

And as it cannot be the Sire will turn from Babes new-born because they are so weak, but rather will rejoice when they begin to recognise [his love]—so also will the Gnosis of the all [rejoice], which doth distribute life to all, and power of giving blessing back to God, which He hath given [us].

14. For God, being Good, and having in Himself eternally the limit of His own eternal fitness, and being deathless, and containing in Himself that lot of that inheritance that cannot come unto an end, and [thus] for ever ever-flowing from out that energy of His, He doth send tidings to this world down here [to urge us] to the rendering of praise that brings us home again.

With Him, therefore, is there no difference with one another; there is no partiality with Him.

But they are one in Thought. One is the Prescience of all. They have one Mind—their Father.

One is the Sense that's active through them—their passion for each other. 'Tis Love Himself who worketh the one harmony of all.

15. Thus, therefore, let us sing the praise of God.

Nay, rather, let us [first] descend to those who have received their sceptres from Him.

For that we ought to make beginning with our Kings, and so by practising ourselves on them, accustom us to songs of praise, and train ourselves in pious service to the Better [One].

[We ought] to make the very first beginnings of our exercise of praise begin from him, and through him exercise the practice [of our praise], that so there may be in us both the exercising of our piety towards God, and of our praise to Kings.

16. For that we ought to make return to them, in that they have extended the prosperity of such great peace to us.

It is the virtue of the King, nay, 'tis his name alone, that doth establish peace.

He has his name of King because he levelleth the summits of dissension with his smooth tread, and is the lord of reason (logos) that [makes] for peace.

And in as much, in sooth, as he hath made himself the natural protector of the kingdom which is not his native land, his very name [is made] the sign of peace.

For that, indeed, you know, the appellation of the King has frequently at once restrained the foe.

Nay, more, the very statues of the King are peaceful harbours for those most tempest-tossed.

The likeness of the King alone has to appear to win the victory, and to assure to all the citizens freedom from hurt and fear.

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The Perfect Sermon, or The Asclepius I

1. [I. M.] [Trismegistus.] God, O Asclepius, hath brought thee unto us that thou mayest hear a Godly sermon, a sermon such as well may seem of all the previous ones we've [either] uttered, or with which we've been inspired by the Divine, more Godly than the piety of [ordinary] faith.

If thou with eye of intellect shalt see this Word thou shalt in thy whole mind be filled quite full of all things good.

If that, indeed, the “many” be the “good,” and not the “one,” in which are “all.” Indeed the difference between the two is found in their agreement,—“All” is of “One” or “One” is “All.” So closely bound is each to other, that neither can be parted from its mate.

But this with diligent attention shalt thou learn from out the sermon that shall follow [this].

But do thou, O Asclepius, go forth a moment and call in the one who is to hear.

(And when he had come in, Asclepius proposed that Ammon too should be allowed to come. Thereon Thrice-greatest said:)

[Tris.] There is no cause why Ammon should be kept away from us. For we remember how we have ourselves set down in writing many things to his address, as though unto a son most dear and most beloved, of physics many things, of ethics [too] as many as could be.

It is, however, with thy name I will inscribe this treatise.

But call, I prithee, no one else but Ammon, lest a most pious sermon on a so great theme be spoilt by the admission of the multitude.

For 'tis the mark of an unpious mind to publish to the knowledge of the crowd a tractate brimming o'er with the full Greatness of Divinity.

(When Ammon too had come within the holy place, and when the sacred group of four was now complete with piety and with God's goodly presence—to them, sunk in fit silence reverently, their souls and minds pendent on Hermes' lips, thus Love Divine began to speak.)

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II

The Perfect Sermon, or

The Asclepius

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1. [Tris.] The soul of every man, O [my] Asclepius, is deathless; yet not all in like fashion, but some in one way or [one] time, some in another.

Asc. Is not, then, O Thrice-greatest one, each soul of one [and the same] quality?

Tris. How quickly hast thou fallen, O Asclepius, from reason's true sobriety!

Did not I say that "All" is "One," and "One" is "All," in as much as all things have been in the Creator before they were created. Nor is He called unfitly "All," in that His members are the "All."

Therefore, in all this argument, see that thou keep in mind Him who is "One"- "All," or

who Himself is maker of the “All.”

2. All things descend from Heaven to Earth, to Water and to Air.

'Tis Fire alone, in that it is borne upwards, giveth life; that which [is carried] downwards [is] subservient to Fire.

Further, whatever doth descend from the above, begetteth; what floweth upwards, nourisheth.

'Tis Earth alone, in that it resteth on itself, that is Receiver of all things, and [also] the Restorer of all genera that it receives.

This Whole, therefore, as thou rememberest, in that it is of all,—in other words, all things, embraced by nature under “Soul” and “World,” are in [perpetual] flux, so varied by the multiform equality of all their forms, that countless kinds of well-distinguished qualities may be discerned, yet with this bond of union, that all should seem as One, and from “One” “All.”

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III

The Perfect Sermon, or

The Asclepius

III

1. That, then, from which the whole Cosmos is formed, consisteth of Four Elements—Fire, Water, Earth, and Air; Cosmos [itself is] one, [its] Soul [is] one, and God is one.

Now lend to me the whole of thee,—all that thou can'st in mind, all that thou skill'st in penetration.

For that the Reason of Divinity may not be known except by an intention of the senses like to it.

'Tis likest to the torrent's flood, down-dashing headlong from above with all-devouring tide; so that it comes about, that by the swiftness of its speed it is too quick for our attention, not only for the hearers, but also for the very teachers.

2. [II. M.] Heaven, then, God Sensible, is the director of all bodies; bodies' increasings and decreasings are ruled by Sun and Moon.

But He who is the Ruler of the Heaven, and of its Soul as well, and of all things within the Cosmos,—He is God, who is the Maker of all things.

For from all those that have been said above, o'er which the same God rules, there floweth forth a flood of all things streaming through the Cosmos and the Soul, of every class and kind, throughout the Nature of [all] things.

The Cosmos hath, moreover, been prepared by God as the receptacle of forms of every kind.

Forth-thinking Nature by these kinds of things, He hath extended Cosmos unto Heaven by means of the Four Elements,—all to give pleasure to the eye of God.

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IV

The Perfect Sermon, or

The Asclepius

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1. And all dependent from Above are subdivided into species in the fashion which I am to tell.

The genera of all things company with their own species; so that the genus is a class in its entirety, the species is part of a genus.

The genus of the Gods will, therefore, make the species of the Gods out of itself.

In like way, too, the genus of the daimons, and of men, likewise of birds, and of all [animals] the Cosmos doth contain within itself, brings into being species like itself.

There is besides a genus other than the animal,—a genus, or indeed a soul, in that it's not without sensation,—in consequence of which it both finds happiness in suitable conditions, and pines and spoils in adverse ones;—I mean [the class] of all things on the earth which owe their life to the sound state of roots and shoots, of which the various kinds are scattered through the length and breadth of Earth.

2. The Heaven itself is full of God. The genera we have just mentioned, therefore, occupy up to the spaces of all things whose species are immortal.

For that a species is part of a genus,—as man, for instance, of mankind,—and that a part must follow its own class's quality.

From which it comes to pass that though all genera are deathless, all species are not so.

The genus of Divinity is in itself and in its species [also] deathless.

As for the genera of other things,—as to their genus, they [too] are everlasting; [for] though [the genus] perish in its species, yet it persists through its fecundity in being born. And for this cause its species are beneath the sway of death; so that man mortal is, mankind immortal.

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V

The Perfect Sermon, or

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1. And yet the species of all genera are interblended with all genera; some which have previously been made, some which are made from these.

The latter, then, which are being made,—either by Gods, or daimons, or by men,—are species all most closely like to their own several genera.

For that it is impossible that bodies should be formed without the will of God; or species be configured without the help of daimons; or animals be taught and trained without the help of men.

2. Whoever of the daimons, then, transcending their own genus, are, by chance, united with a species, by reason of the neighbourhood of any species of the Godlike class,—these are considered like to Gods.

Whereas those species of the daimons which continue in the quality of their own class,—these love men's rational nature [and occupy themselves with men], and are

called daimons proper.

Likewise is it the case with men, or more so even. Diverse and multiform, the species of mankind. And coming in itself from the association spoken of above, it of necessity doth bring about a multitude of combinations of all other species and almost of all things.

3. Wherefore doth man draw nigh unto the Gods, if he have joined himself unto the Gods with Godlike piety by reason of his mind, whereby he is joined to the Gods; and [nigh] unto the daimons, in that he is joined unto them [as well].

Whereas those men who are contented with the mediocrity of their own class, and the remaining species of mankind, will be like those unto the species of whose class they've joined themselves.

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VI

The Perfect Sermon, or

The Asclepius

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1. [III. M.] It is for reasons such as these, Asclepius, man is a mighty wonder,—an animal meet for our worship and for our respect.

For he doth pass into God's Nature, as though himself were God. This genus [also] knows the genus of the daimons, as though man knew he had a [common] origin with them. He thinketh little of the part of human nature in him, from confidence in the divineness of [his] other part.

How much more happy is the blend of human nature [than of all the rest]! Joined to the Gods by his cognate divinity, a man looks down upon the part of him by means of which he's common with the Earth.

The rest of things to which he knows he's kin, by [reason of] the heavenly order [in him], he binds unto himself with bonds of love; and thus he turns his gaze to Heaven.

2. So, then, [man] hath his place in the more blessed station of the Midst; so that he loves [all] those below himself, and in his turn is loved by those above.

He tills the Earth. He mingles with the Elements by reason of the swiftness of his mind. He plunges into the Sea's depths by means of its profundity. He puts his values on all things.

Heaven seems not too high for him; for it is measured by the wisdom of his mind as though it were quite near.

No darkness of the Air obstructs the penetration of his mind. No density of Earth impedes his work. No depth of Water blunts his sight.& [Though still] the same [yet] is he all, and everywhere is he the same.

3. Of all these genera, those [species] which are animal have [many] roots, which stretch from the above below, whereas those which are stationary—these from [one] living root send forth a wood of branching greenery up from below into the upper parts.

Moreover, some of them are nourished with a two-fold form of food, while others with a single form.

Twain are the forms of food—for soul and body, of which [all] animals consist. Their soul is nourished by the ever-restless motion of the World; their bodies have their growth from foods [drawn] from the water and the earth of the inferior world.

Spirit, with which they all are filled, being interblended with the rest, doth make them live; sense being added, and also reason in the case of man—which hath been given to man alone as a fifth part out of the æther.

Of all the living things [God] doth adorn, extend, exalt, the sense of man alone unto the understanding of the Reason of Divinity.

But since I am impressed to speak concerning Sense, I will a little further on set forth for you the sermon on this [point]; for that it is most holy, and [most] mighty, not less than in the Reason of Divinity itself.

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The Perfect Sermon, or
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1. But now I'll finish for you what I have begun. For I was speaking at the start of union with the Gods, by which men only consciously enjoy the Gods' regard,—I mean whatever men have won such rapture that they have obtained a share of that Divine Sense of intelligence which is the most Divine of Senses, found in God and in man's reason.

Asc. Are not the senses of all men, Thrice-greatest one, the same?

Tris. Nay, [my] Asclepius, all have not won true reason; but wildly rushing in pursuit of [reason's] counterfeit, they never see the thing itself, and are deceived. And this breeds evil in their minds, and [thus] transforms the best of animals into the nature of a beast and manners of the brutes.

2. But as to Sense and all things similar, I will set forth the whole discourse when [I explain] concerning Spirit.

For man is the sole animal that is twofold. One part of him is simple: the [man] "essential," as say the Greeks, but which we call the "form of the Divine Similitude."

He also is fourfold: that which the Greeks call "hylic," [but] which we call "cosmic"; of which is made the corporal part, in which is vested what we just have said is the divine in man,—in which the godhead of the Mind alone, together with its kin, that is the Pure Mind's senses, findeth home and rest, its self with its own self, as though shut in the body's walls.

3. [IV. M.] Asc. What, then, Thrice-greatest one, has caused it that man should be planted in the world, and should not pass his life in highest happiness in that part [of the universe] where there is God?

[Tris.] Rightly thou questionest, O [my] Asclepius! And we pray God that He bestow on us the power of setting forth this reason; since everything depends upon His Will, and specially those things that are set forth about the Highest Whole, the Reason that's the object of our present argument. Hear, then, Asclepius!

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1. The Lord and Maker of all things, whom we call rightly God, when from Himself He made the second [God], the Visible and Sensible,—I call him Sensible not that He hath sensation in Himself (for as to this, whether or no He have himself sensation, we will some other time declare), but that He is the object of the senses of those who see;—when, then, He made Him first, but second to Himself, and that He seemed to Him [most] fair, as one filled to the full with goodness of all things, He fell in love with Him as being part of His Divinity.

2. Accordingly, in that He was so mighty and so fair, He willed that some one else should have the power to contemplate the One He had made from Himself. And thereon He made man,—the imitator of His Reason and His Love.

The Will of God is in itself complete accomplishment; inasmuch as together with His having willed, in one and the same time He hath brought it to full accomplishment.

And so, when He perceived that the “essential” [man] could not be lover of all things, unless He clothed him in a cosmic carapace, He shut him in within a house of body,—and ordered it that all [men] should be so,—from either nature making him a single blend and fair-proportioned mixture.

3. Therefore hath He made man of soul and body,—that is, of an eternal and a mortal nature; so that an animal thus blended can content his dual origin,—admire and worship things in heaven, and cultivate and govern things on earth.

By mortal things I do not mean the water or the earth [themselves], for these are two of the [immortal] elements that nature hath made subject unto men,—but [either] things that are by men, or [that are] in or from them; such as the cultivation of the earth itself, pastures, [and] buildings, harbours, voyagings, intercommunications, mutual services, which are the firmest bonds of men between themselves and that part of the Cosmos which consists [indeed] of water and of earth, [but is] the Cosmos’ terrene part,—which is preserved by knowledge and the use of arts and sciences; without which [things] God willeth not Cosmos should be complete.

In that necessity doth follow what seems good to God; performance waits upon His will.

Nor is it credible that that which once hath pleased Him, will become displeasing unto God; since He hath known both what will be, and what will please Him, long before.

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The Perfect Sermon, or
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1. [V. M.] But, O Asclepius, I see that thou with swift desire of mind art in a hurry to be told how man can have a love and worship of the Heaven, or of the things that are therein. Hear, then, Asclepius!

The love of God and Heaven, together with all them that are therein, is one perpetual act of worship.

No other thing ensouled, of Gods or animals, can do this thing, save man alone. 'Tis in the admiration, adoration, [and] the praise of men, and [in their] acts of worship, that Heaven and Heaven's hosts find their delight.

2. Nor is it without cause the Muses' choir hath been sent down by Highest Deity unto the host of men; in order that, forsooth, the terrene world should not seem too uncultured, had it lacked the charm of measures, but rather that with songs and praise of men accompanied with music, He might be lauded,—He who alone is all, or is the Sire of all; and so not even on the earths, should there have been an absence of the sweetness of the harmony of heavenly praise.

3. Some, then, though they be very few, endowed with the Pure Mind, have been entrusted with the sacred charge of contemplating Heaven.

Whereas those men who, from the two-fold blending of their nature, have not as yet withdrawn their inner reason from their body's mass, these are appointed for the study of the elements, and [all] that is below them.

4. Thus man's an animal; yet not indeed less potent in that he's partly mortal, but rather doth he seem to be all the more fit and efficacious for reaching Certain Reason, since he has had mortality bestowed on him as well.

For it is plain he could not have sustained the strain of both, unless he had been formed out of both natures, so that he could possess the powers of cultivating Earthly things and loving Heaven.

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X

The Perfect Sermon, or
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X

1. The Reason of a thesis such as this, O [my] Asclepius, I would that thou should'st grasp, not only with the keen attention of thy soul, but also with its living power [as well].

For 'tis a Reason that most men cannot believe; the Perfect and the True are to be grasped by the more holy minds. Hence, then, will I begin.

2. [VI. M.] The Lord of the Eternity is the first God; the second's Cosmos; man is the third.

God is the Maker of the Cosmos and of all the things therein; at the same time He ruleth all, with man himself, [who is] the ruler of the compound thing; the whole of which man taking on himself, doth make of it the proper care of his own love, in order that the two of them, himself and Cosmos, may be an ornament each unto other; so that from this divine compost of man, "World" seems most fitly called "Cosmos" in Greek.

3. He knows himself; he knows the World as well. So that he recollects, indeed, what is convenient to his own parts. He calls to mind what he must use, that they may be of service to himself; giving the greatest praise and thanks to God, His Image reverencing,—not ignorant that he is, too, God's image the second [one]; for that there are two images of God—Cosmos and man.

4. So that it comes to pass that, since man's is a single structure,—in that part [of him] which doth consist of Soul, and Sense, of Spirit, and of Reason, he's divine; so that he seems to have the power to mount from as it were the higher elements into the Heaven.

But in his cosmic part, which is composed of fire, and water, and of air, he stayeth mortal on the Earth,—lest he should leave all things committed to his care forsaken and bereft.

Thus human kind is made in one part deathless, and in the other part subject to death while in a body.

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XI
The Perfect Sermon, or
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1. Now of that dual nature,—that is to say of man,—there is a chief capacity. [And that is] piety, which goodness follows after.

[And] this [capacity] then, and then only, seems to be perfected, if it be fortified with virtue of despising all desires for alien things.

For alien from every part of kinship with the Gods are all things on the Earth, whatever are possessed from bodily desires,—to which we rightly give the name “possessions,” in that they are not born with us, but later on begin to be possessed by us; wherefore we call them by the name possessions.

2. All such things, then, are alien from man,—even his body. So that we can despise not only what we long for, but also that from which the vice of longing comes to us.

For just as far as the increase of reason leads our soul, so far one should be man; in order that by contemplating the divine, one should look down upon, and disregard the mortal part, which hath been joined to him, through the necessity of helping on the lower world.

3. For that, in order that a man should be complete in either part, observe that he hath been composed of elements of either part in sets of four;—with hands, and feet, both of them pairs, and with the other members of his body, by means of which he may do service to the lower (that is to say the terrene) world.

And to these parts [are added other] four;—of sense, and soul, of memory, and foresight, by means of which he may become acquainted with the rest of things divine, and judge of them.

Hence it is brought about that man investigates the differences and qualities, effects and quantities of things, with critical research; yet, as he is held back with the too heavy weight of body's imperfection, he cannot properly descry the causes of the nature of [all] things which [really] are the true ones.

4. Man, then, being thus created and composed, and to such ministry and service set by Highest God,—man, by his keeping suitably the world in proper order, [and] by his piously adoring God, in both becomingly and suitably obeying God's Good Will,—[man being] such as this, with what reward think'st thou he should be recompensed?

If that, indeed,—since Cosmos is God's work,—he who preserves and adds on to its beauty by his love, joins his own work unto God's Will; when he with toil and care doth fashion out the species (which He hath made [already] with His Divine Intent), with help of his own body;—with what reward think'st thou he should be recompensed, unless it be with that with which our forebears have been blest?

5. That this may be the pleasure of God's Love, such is our prayer for you, devoted ones.

In other words, may He, when ye have served your time, and have put off the world's restraint, and freed yourselves from deathly bonds, restore you pure and holy to the nature of your higher self, that is of the Divine!

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The Perfect Sermon, or
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XII

1. Asc. Rightly and truly, O Thrice-greatest one, thou speakest. This is the prize for those who piously subordinate their lives to God and live to help the world.

Tris. [To those], however, who have lived in other fashion impiously,—[to them] both is return to Heaven denied, and there's appointed them migration into other bodies unworthy of a holy soul and base; so that, as this discourse of ours will show, souls in their life on earth run risk of losing hope of future immortality.

2. But [all of this] doth seem to some beyond belief; a tale to others; to others [yet again], perchance, a subject for their mirth.

For in this life in body, it is a pleasant thing—the pleasure that one gets from one's possessions. 'Tis for this cause that spite, in envy of its [hope of] immortality, doth clap the soul in prison, as they say, and keep it down, so that it stays in that part of itself in

which it's mortal, nor suffers it to know the part of its divinity.

3. For I will tell thee, as though it were prophetic-ly, that no one after us shall have the Single Love, the Love of wisdom-loving, which consists in Gnosis of Divinity alone,—[the practice of] perpetual contemplation and of holy piety. For that the many do confound philosophy with multifarious reasoning.

Asc. Why is it, then, the many make philosophy so hard to grasp; or wherefore is it they confound this thing with multifarious reasoning?

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1. Tris. 'Tis in this way, Asclepius;—by mixing it, by means of subtle expositions, with divers sciences not easy to be grasped,—such as arithmetic, and music, and geometry.

But Pure Philosophy, which doth depend on godly piety alone, should only so far occupy itself with other arts, that it may [know how to] appreciate the working out in numbers of the fore-appointed stations of the stars when they return, and of the course of their procession.

Let her, moreover, know how to appreciate the Earth's dimensions, its qualities and quantities, the Water's depths, the strength of Fire, and the effects and nature of all these. [And so] let her give worship and give praise unto the Art and Mind of God.

2. As for [true] Music,—to know this is naught else than to have knowledge of the order of all things, and whatsoe'er God's Reason hath decreed.

For that the order of each several thing when set together in one [key] for all, by means of skilful reason, will make, as 'twere, the sweetest and the truest harmony with God's [own] Song.

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XIV

1. Asc. Who, therefore, will the men be after us?

Tris. They will be led astray by sophists' cleverness, and turned from True Philosophy,—the Pure and Holy [Love].

For that to worship God with single mind and soul, and reverence the things that He hath made, and to give thanks unto His Will, which is the only thing quite full of Good,—this is Philosophy unsullied by the soul's rough curiousness.

But of this subject let what has been said so far suffice.

2. [VII. M.] And now let us begin to treat of Spirit and such things.

There was first God and Matter, which we in Greek believe [to be] the Cosmos; and Spirit was with Cosmos, or Spirit was in Cosmos, but not in like way as in God; nor were there things [as yet] from which the Cosmos [comes to birth] in God.

They were not; just for the very reason that they were not, but were as yet in that [condition] whence they have had their birth.

For those things only are not called ingenerable which have not yet been born, but [also] those which lack the fertilizing power of generating, so that from them naught can be born.

And so whatever things there are that have in them the power of generating,—these two are generable, [that is to say,] from which birth can take place, though they be born from their own selves [alone]. For there's no question that from those born from themselves birth can with ease take place, since from them all are born.

3. God, then, the everlasting, God the eternal, nor can be born, nor could He have been born. That is, That was, That shall be ever. This, therefore, is God's Nature—all from itself [alone].

But Matter (or the Nature of the Cosmos) and Spirit, although they do not seem to be things born from any source, yet in themselves possess the power of generation and of generating,—the nature of fecundity.

For the beginning [truly] is in [just that] quality of nature which possesses in itself the power and matter both of conception and of birth. This, then, without conception of another, is generable of its own self.

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1. But, on the other hand, [whereas] those things which only have the power of bringing forth by blending with another nature, are thus to be distinguished, this Space of Cosmos, with those that are in it, seems not to have been born, in that [the Cosmos] has in it undoubtedly all Nature's potency.

By "Space" I mean that in which are all things. For all these things could not have been had Space not been, to hold them all. Since for all things that there have been, must be provided Space.

For neither could the qualities nor quantities, nor the positions, nor [yet] the operations, be distinguished of those things which are no where.

2. So then the Cosmos, also, though not born, still has in it the births of all; in that, indeed, it doth afford for all of them most fecund wombs for their conception.

It, therefore, is the sum of [all that] quality of Matter which hath creative potency, although it hath not been [itself] created.

And, seeing that [this] quality of Matter is in its nature [simple] productiveness; so the same [source] produces bad as well [as good].

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XVI
The Perfect Sermon, or
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1. I have not, therefore, O Asclepius and Ammon, said what many say, that God could not excise and banish evil from the Scheme of Things;—to whom no answer need at all be given. Yet for your sakes I will continue what I have begun, and give a reason.

They say that God ought to have freed the World from bad in every way; for so much is it in the World, that it doth seem to be as though it were one of its limbs.

This was foreseen by Highest God and [due] provision made, as much as ever could have been in reason made, then when He thought it proper to endow the minds of men with sense, and science and intelligence.

2. For it is by these things alone whereby we stand above the rest of animals, that we are able to avoid the snares and crimes of ill.

For he who shall on sight have turned from them, before he hath become immeshed in them,—he is a man protected by divine intelligence and [godly] prudence.

For that the ground-work of [true] science doth consist of the top-stones of virtue.

3. It is by Spirit that all things are governed in the Cosmos, and made quick,—Spirit made subject to the Will of Highest God, as though it were an engine or machine.

So far, then, [only] let Him be by us conceived,—as Him who is conceivable by mind

alone, who is called Highest God, the Ruler and Director of God Sensible, of Him who in Himself includes all Space, all Substance, and all Matter, of things producing and begetting, and all whatever is, however great it be.

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The Perfect Sermon, or

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1. It is by Spirit that all species in the Cosmos are [or] moved or ruled,—each one according to its proper nature given it by God.

Matter, or Cosmos, on the other hand, is that which holds all things,—the field of motion, and the that which crowds together all; of which God is the Ruler, distributing unto all cosmic things all that is requisite to each.

It is with Spirit that He fills all things, according to the quality of each one's nature.

2. [Now,] seeing that the hollow roundness of the Cosmos is borne round into the fashion of a sphere; by reason of its [very] quality or form, it never can be altogether visible unto itself.

So that, however high a place in it thou shouldest choose for looking down below, thou could'st not see from it what is at bottom, because in many places it confronts [the senses], and so is thought to have the quality [of being visible throughout].

For it is solely owing to the forms of species, with images of which it seems insculpted, that it is thought [to be] as though 'twere visible [throughout]; but as a fact 'tis ever to itself invisible.

3. Wherefore, its bottom, or its [lowest] part, if [such a] place there be within a sphere, is called in Greek a-eidēs; since that eidein in Greek means “seeing,”—which “being-seen” the sphere's beginning lacks.

Hence, too, the species have the name eideai, since they're of form we cannot see.

Therefore, in that they are deprived of “being-seen,” in Greek they are called Hades; in that they are at bottom of the sphere, they're called in Latin Inferi.

These, then, are principal and prior, and, as it were, the sources and the heads of all the things which are in them, through them, or from them.

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XVIII

The Perfect Sermon, or

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1. Asc. All things, then, in themselves (as thou, Thrice-greatest one, dost say) are cosmic [principles] (as I should say) of all the species which are in them, [or] as it were, the sum and substance of each one of them.

Tris. So Cosmos, then, doth nourish bodies; the Spirit, souls; the [Higher] Sense (with which Celestial Gift mankind alone is blest) doth feed the mind.

And [these are] not all men, but [they are] few, whose minds are of such quality that they can be receptive of so great a blessing.

2. For as the World's illumined by the Sun, so is the mind of man illumined by that Light; nay, in [still] fuller measure.

For whatsoever thing the Sun doth shine upon, it is anon, by interjection of the Earth or

Moon, or by the intervention of the night, robbed of its light.

But once the [Higher] Sense hath been commingled with the soul of man, there is at-onement from the happy union of the blending of their natures; so that minds of this kind are never more held fast in errors of the darkness.

Wherefore, with reason have they said the [Higher] Senses are the souls of Gods; to which I add: not of all Gods, but of the great ones [only]; nay, even of the principles of these.

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The Perfect Sermon, or

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1. [VIII. M.] Asc. What dost thou call, Thrice-greatest one, the heads of things, or sources of beginnings?

Tris. Great are the mysteries which I reveal to thee, divine the secrets I disclose; and so I make beginning of this thing with prayers for Heaven's favour.

The hierarchies of Gods are numerous; and of them all one class is called the Noumenal, the other [class] the Sensible.

The former are called Noumenal, not for the reason that they're thought to lie beyond our senses; for these are just the Gods we sense more truly than the ones we call the visible,—just as our argument will prove, and thou, if thou attend, wilt be made fit to see.

For that a lofty reasoning, and much more one that is too godlike for the mental grasp of [average] men, if that the speaker's words are not received with more attentive service of the ears,—will fly and flow beyond them; or rather will flow back [again], and mingle with the streams of its own source.

2. There are, then, [certain] Gods who are the principals of all the species.

Next there come those whose essence is their principal. These are the Sensible, each similar to its own dual source, who by their sensibility affect all things,—the one part through the other part [in each] making to shine the proper work of every single one.

Of Heaven,—or of whatsoe'er it be that is embraced within the term,—the essence-chief is Zeus; for 'tis through Heaven that Zeus gives life to all.

Sun's essence-chief is light; for the good gift of light is poured on us through the Sun's disk.

3. The "Thirty-six," who have the name of Horoscopes, are in the [self] same space as the Fixed Stars; of these the essence-chief, or prince, is he whom they call Pantomorph, or Omniform, who fashioneth the various forms for various species.

The "Seven" who are called spheres, have essence-chiefs, that is, [have each] their proper rulers, whom they call [all together] Fortune and Heimarmenē, whereby all things are changed by nature's law; perpetual stability being varied with incessant motion.

The Air, moreover, is the engine, or machine, through which all things are made—(there

is, however, an essence-chief of this, a second [Air])—mortal from mortal things and things like these.

4. These hierarchies of Gods, then, being thus and [in this way] related, from bottom unto top, are [also] thus connected with each other, and tend towards themselves; so mortal things are bound to mortal, things sensible to sensible.

The whole of [this grand scale of] Rulership, however, seems to Him [who is] the Highest Lord, either to be not many things, or rather [to be] one.

For that from One all things depending, and flowing down from it,—when they are seen as separate, they're thought to be as many as they possibly can be; but in their union it is one [thing], or rather two, from which all things are made;—that is, from Matter, by means of which the other things are made, and by the Will of Him, by nod of whom they're brought to pass.

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The Perfect Sermon, or

The Asclepius

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1. Asc. Is this again the reason, O Thrice-greatest one?

Tris. It is, Asclepius. For God's the Father or the Lord of all, or whatsoever else may be the name by which He's named more holily and piously by men,—which should be set apart among ourselves for sake of our intelligence.

For if we contemplate this so transcendent God, we shall not make Him definite by any of these names.

For if a [spoken] word is this:—a sound proceeding from the air, when struck by breath, denoting the whole will, perchance, of man, or else the [higher] sense, which by good chance a man perceives by means of mind, when out of [all his] senses,—a name the stuff of which, made of a syllable or two, has so been limited and pondered, that it might serve in man as necessary link between the voice and ear;—thus [must] the Name of God in full consist of Sense, and Spirit, and of Air, and of all things in them, or through, or with them.

2. Indeed, I have no hope that the Creator of the whole of Greatness, the Father and the Lord of all the things [that are], could ever have one name, even although it should be made up of a multitude—He who cannot be named, or rather He who can be called by every name.

For He, indeed, is One and All; so that it needs must be that all things should be called by the same name as His, or He Himself called by the names of all.

3. He, then, alone, yet all-complete in the fertility of either sex, ever with child of His own Will, doth ever bring to birth whatever He hath willed to procreate.

His Will is the All-goodness, which also is the Goodness of all things, born from the nature of His own Divinity,—in order that all things may be, just as they all have been, and that henceforth the nature of being born from their own selves may be sufficient to all things that will be born.

Let this, then, be the reason given thee, Asclepius, wherefore and how all things are made of either sex.

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XXI

The Perfect Sermon, or

The Asclepius

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1. Asc. Thou speak'st of God, then, O Thrice-greatest one?

Tris. Not only God, Asclepius, but all things living and inanimate. For 'tis impossible that any of the things that are should be unfruitful.

For if fecundity should be removed from all the things that are, it could not be that they should be for ever what they are. I mean that Nature, Sense, and Cosmos, have in themselves the power of being born, and of preserving all things that are born.

For either sex is full of procreation; and of each one there is a union, or,—what's more true,—a unity incomprehensible; which you may rightly call Erōs or Aphroditē, or both [names].

2. This, then, is truer than all truth, and plainer than what the mind [’s eye] perceives;—that from that Universal God of Universal Nature all other things for evermore have found, and had bestowed on them, the mystery of bringing forth; in which there is innate the sweetest Charity, [and] Joy, [and] Merriment, Longing, and Love Divine.

We might have had to tell the mighty power and the compulsion of this mystery, if it had not been able to be known by every one from personal experience, by observation of himself.

3. For if thou should'st regard that supreme [point] of time when ... the one nature doth pour forth the young into the other one, and when the other greedily absorbs [it] from the first, and hides it [ever] deeper [in itself]; then, at that time, out of their common congress, females attain the nature of the males, males weary grow with female listlessness.

And so the consummation of this mystery, so sweet and requisite, is wrought in secret; lest, owing to the vulgar jests of ignorance, the deity of either sex should be compelled to blush at natural congress,—and much more still, if it should be subjected to the sight of impious folk.

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The Perfect Sermon, or

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1. The pious are not numerous, however; nay, they are very few, so that they may be counted even in the world.

Whence it doth come about, that in the many bad inheres, through defect of the Gnosis and Discernment of the things that are.

For that it is from the intelligence of Godlike Reason, by which all things are ordered, there come to birth contempt and remedy of vice throughout the world.

But when unknowingness and ignorance persist, all vicious things wax strong, and plague the soul with wounds incurable; so that, infected with them, and initiated, it swells up, as though it were with poisons,—except for those who know the Discipline of souls and highest Cure of intellect.

2. So, then, although it may do good to few alone, 'tis proper to develop and explain this thesis:—wherefore Divinity hath deigned to share His science and intelligence with men alone. Give ear, accordingly!

When God, [our] Sire and Lord, made man, after the Gods, out of an equal mixture of a less pure cosmic part and a divine,—it [naturally] came to pass the imperfections of the cosmic part remained commingled with [our] frames, and other ones [as well], by reason of the food and sustenance we have out of necessity in common with all lives; by reason of which things it needs must be that the desires, and passions, and other vices, of the mind should occupy the souls of human kind.

3. As for the Gods, in as much as they had been made of Nature's fairest part, and have no need of the supports of reason and of discipline,—although, indeed, their deathlessness, the very strength of being ever of one single age, stands in this case for prudence and for science, still, for the sake of reason's unity, instead of science and of intellect (so that the Gods should not be strange to these),—He, by His everlasting law, decreed for them an order, circumscribed by the necessity of law.

While as for man, He doth distinguish him from all the other animals by reason and by discipline alone; by means of which men can remove and separate their bodies' vices,—He helping them to hope and effort after deathlessness.

4. In fine, He hath made man both good and able to share in immortal life,—out of two natures, [one] mortal, [one] divine.

And just because he is thus fashioned by the Will of God, it is appointed that man should be superior both to the Gods, who have been made of an immortal nature only, and also to all mortal things.

It is because of this that man, being joined unto the Gods by kinsmanship, doth reverence them with piety and holy mind; while, on their side, the Gods with pious sympathy regard and guard all things of men.

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The Perfect Sermon, or

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1. But this can only be averred of a few men endowed with pious minds. Still, of the rest, the vicious folk, we ought to say no word, for fear a very sacred sermon should be spoiled by thinking of them.

[IX. M.] And since our sermon treats of the relationship and intercourse of men and Gods,—learn, Asclepius, the power and strength of man!

[Our] Lord and Father, or what is Highest God,—as He's Creator of the Gods in Heaven, so man's the maker of the gods who, in the temples, suffer man's approach, and who not only have light poured on them, but who send forth [their] light [on all]; not only does a man go forward towards the God[s], but also he confirms the Gods [on earth].

Art thou surprised, Asclepius; nay is it not that even thou dost not believe?

2. Asc. I am amazed, Thrice-greatest one; but willingly I give assent to [all] thy words. I

judge that man most blest who hath attained so great felicity.

Tris. And rightly so; [for] he deserves our wonder, in that he is the greatest of them all.

As for the genus of the Gods in Heaven,—’tis plain from the commixture of them all, that it has been made pregnant from the fairest part of nature, and that the only signs [by which they are discerned] are, as it were, before all else their heads.

3. Whereas the species of the gods which humankind constructs is fashioned out of either nature,—out of that nature which is more ancient and far more divine, and out of that which is in men; that is, out of the stuff of which they have been made and are configured, not only in their heads alone, but also in each limb and their whole frame.

And so mankind, in imaging Divinity, stays mindful of the nature and the source of its own self.

So that, just as [our] Sire and Lord did make the Gods æonian, that they might be like Him; so hath mankind configured its own gods according to the likeness of the look of its own self.

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The Perfect Sermon, or

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1. Asc. Thou dost not mean their statues, dost thou, O Thrice-greatest one?

Tris. [I mean their] statues, O Asclepius,—dost thou not see how much thou even, doubttest?—statues, ensouled with sense, and filled with spirit, which work such mighty and such [strange] results,—statues which can foresee what is to come, and which perchance can prophesy, foretelling things by dreams and many other ways,—[statues] that take their strength away from men, or cure their sorrow, if they do so deserve.

Dost thou not know, Asclepius, that Egypt is the image of the Heaven; or, what is truer still, the transference, or the descent, of all that are in governance or exercise in Heaven? And if more truly [still] it must be said,—this land of ours is Shrine of all the World.

2. Further, in that 'tis fitting that the prudent should know all before, it is not right ye should be ignorant of this.

The time will come when Egypt will appear to have in vain served the Divinity with pious

mind and constant worship; and all its holy cult will fall to nothingness and be in vain.

For that Divinity is now about to hasten back from Earth to Heaven, and Egypt shall be left; and Earth, which was the seat of pious cults, shall be bereft and widowed of the presence of the Gods.

And foreigners shall fill this region and this land; and there shall be not only the neglect of pious cults, but—what is still more painful,—as though enacted by the laws, a penalty shall be decreed against the practice of [our] pious cults and worship of the Gods—[entire] proscription of them.

3. Then shall this holiest land, seat of [our] shrines and temples, be choked with tombs and corpses.

O Egypt, Egypt, of thy pious cults tales only will remain, as far beyond belief for thy own sons [as for the rest of men]; words only will be left cut on thy stones, thy pious deeds recounting!

And Egypt will be made the home of Scyth or Indian, or some one like to them,—that is a foreign neighbour.

Ay, for the Godly company shall mount again to Heaven, and their forsaken worshippers shall all die out; and Egypt, thus bereft of God and man, shall be abandoned.

4. And now I speak to thee, O River, holiest [Stream]! I tell thee what will be. With bloody torrents shalt thou overflow thy banks. Not only shall thy streams divine be stained with blood; but they shall all flow over [with the same].

The tale of tombs shall far exceed the [number of the] quick; and the surviving remnant shall be Egyptians in their tongue alone, but in their actions foreigners.

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The Perfect Sermon, or

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1. Why dost thou weep, Asclepius? Nay, more than this, by far more wretched,—Egypt herself shall be impelled and stained with greater ills.

For she, the Holy [Land], and once deservedly the most beloved by God, by reason of her pious service of the Gods on earth,—she, the sole colony of holiness, and teacher of religion [on the earth], shall be the type of all that is most barbarous.

And then, out of our loathing for mankind, the World will seem no more deserving of our wonder and our praise.

All this good thing,—than which there has been fairer naught that can be seen, nor is there anything, nor will there [ever] be,—will be in jeopardy.

2. And it will prove a burden unto men; and on account of this they will despise and cease to love this Cosmos as a whole,—the changeless work of God; the glorious construction of the Good, comprised of multifold variety of forms; the engine of God's Will, supporting His own work ungrudgingly; the multitudinous whole massed in a unity of all, that should be revered, praised and loved,—by them at least who have the

eyes to see.

For Darkness will be set before the Light, and Death will be thought preferable to Life. No one will raise his eyes to Heaven; the pious man will be considered mad, the impious a sage; the frenzied held as strong, the worst as best.

3. For soul, and all concerning it,—whereby it doth presume that either it hath been born deathless, or that it will attain to deathlessness, according to the argument I have set forth for you,—[all this] will be considered not only food for sport, but even vanity.

Nay, [if ye will] believe me, the penalty of death shall be decreed to him who shall devote himself to the Religion of the Mind.

New statutes shall come into force, a novel law; naught [that is] sacred, nothing pious, naught that is worthy of the Heaven, or Gods in Heaven, shall [e'er] be heard, or [even] mentally believed.

4. The sorrowful departure of the Gods from men takes place; bad angels only stay, who mingled with humanity will lay their hands on them, and drive the wretched folk to every ill of recklessness,—to wars, and robberies, deceits, and all those things that are opposed to the soul's nature.

Then shall the Earth no longer hold together; the Sea no longer shall be sailed upon; nor shall the Heaven continue with the Courses of the Stars, nor the Star-course in Heaven.

The voice of every God shall cease in the [Great] Silence that no one can break; the fruits of Earth shall rot; nay, Earth no longer shall bring forth; and Air itself shall faint in that sad listlessness.

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The Perfect Sermon, or

The Asclepius

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1. This, when it comes, shall be the World's old age, impiety,—irregularity, and lack of rationality in all good things.

And when these things all come to pass, Asclepius,—then He, [our] Lord and Sire, God First in power, and Ruler of the One God [Visible], in check of crime, and calling error back from the corruption of all things unto good manners and to deeds spontaneous with His Will (that is to say God's Goodness),—ending all ill, by either washing it away with water-flood, or burning it away with fire, or by the means of pestilent diseases, spread throughout all hostile lands,—God will recall the Cosmos to its ancient form; so that the World itself shall seem meet to be worshipped and admired; and God, the Maker and Restorer of so vast a work, be sung by the humanity who shall be then, with ceaseless heraldings of praise and [hymns of] blessing.

2. For this [Re-] birth of Cosmos is the making new of all good things, and the most holy and most pious bringing-back again of Nature's self, by means of a set course of time,—of Nature, which was without beginning, and which is without an end. For that God's Will hath no beginning; and, in that 'tis the same and as it is, it is without an end.

Asc. Because God's Nature's the Determination of the Will. Determination is the Highest

Good; is it not so, Thrice-greatest one?

3. Tris. Asclepius, Will is Determination's child; nay, willing in itself comes from the Will.

Not that He willeth aught desiring it; for that He is the Fullness of all things, and wills what things He has.

He thus wills all good things, and has all that He wills. Nay, rather, He doth think and will all good.

This, then, is God; the World of Good's His Image.

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The Perfect Sermon, or
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XXVII

1. Asc. [Is Cosmos] good, Thrice-greatest one?

Tris. ['Tis] good, as I will teach thee, O Asclepius.

For just as God is the Apportioner and Steward of good things to all the species, or [more correctly] genera, which are in Cosmos,—that is to say, of Sense, and Soul, and Life,—so Cosmos is the giver and bestower of all things which seem unto [us] mortals good;—that is to say, the alternation of its parts, of seasonable fruits, birth, growth, maturity, and things like these.

And for this cause God doth transcend the height of highest Heaven, extending everywhere, and doth behold all things on every side.

2. Beyond the Heaven starless Space doth stretch, stranger to every thing possessed of body.

The Dispensator who's between the Heaven and Earth, is Ruler of the Space which we call Zeus [Above].

The Earth and Sea is ruled by Zeus Below; he is the Nourisher of mortal lives, and of fruit-bearing [trees].

It is by reason of the powers of all of these that fruits, and trees, and earth, grow green.

The powers and energies of [all] the other [Gods] will be distributed through all the things that are.

3. Yea, they who rule the earth shall be distributed [through all the lands], and [finally] be gathered in a state,—at top of Egypt's upper part,—which shall be founded towards the setting sun, and to which all the mortal race shall speed.

Asc. But now, just at this moment, where are they, Thrice-greatest one?

Tris. They're gathered in a very large community, upon the Libyan Hill. And now enough concerning this hath been declared.

4. [X. M.] But now the question as to deathlessness or as to death must be discussed.

The expectation and the fear of death torture the multitude, who do not know True Reason.

Now death is brought about by dissolution of the body, wearied out with toil, and of the number, when complete, by which the body's members are arranged into a single engine for the purposes of life. The body dies, when it no longer can support the life-powers of a man.

This, then, is death,—the body's dissolution, and the disappearance of corporeal sense.

As to this death anxiety is needless. But there's another [death] which no man can escape, but which the ignorance and unbelief of man think little of.

5. Asc. What is it, O Thrice-greatest one, that men know nothing of, or disbelieve that it can be?

Tris. So, lend thy ear, Asclepius!

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The Perfect Sermon, or

The Asclepius

XXVIII

1. When, [then,] the soul's departure from the body shall take place,—then shall the judgment and the weighing of its merit pass into its highest daimon's power.

And when he sees it pious is and just,—he suffers it to rest in spots appropriate to it.

But if he find it soiled with stains of evil deeds, and fouled with vice,—he drives it from Above into the Depths, and hands it o'er to warring hurricanes and vortices of Air, of Fire, and Water.

2. 'Twixt Heaven and Earth, upon the waves of Cosmos, is it dragged in contrary directions, for ever racked with ceaseless pains; so that in this its deathless nature doth afflict the soul, in that because of its unceasing sense, it hath the yoke of ceaseless torture set upon its neck.

Know, then, that we should dread, and be afraid, and [ever] be upon our guard, lest we should be entangled in these [toils].

For those who do not now believe, will after their misdeeds be driven to believe, by facts not words, by actual sufferings of punishment and not by threats.

3. Asc. The faults of men are not, then, punished, O Thrice-greatest one, by law of man alone?

Tris. In the first place, Asclepius, all things on Earth must die.

Further, those things which live by reason of a body, and which do cease from living by reason of the same,—all these, according to the merits of this life, or its demerits, find due [rewards or] punishments.

[And as to punishments] they're all the more severe, if in their life [their misdeeds] chance to have been hidden, till their death. For [then] they will be made full conscious

of all things by the divinity, just as they are, according to the shades of punishment allotted to their crimes.

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The Perfect Sermon, or

The Asclepius

XXIX

1. Asc. And these deserve [still] greater punishments, Thrice-greatest one?

Tris. [Assuredly;] for those condemned by laws of man do lose their life by violence, so that [all] men may see they have not yielded up their soul to pay the debt of nature, but have received the penalty of their deserts.

Upon the other hand, the righteous man finds his defence in serving God and deepest piety. For God doth guard such men from every ill.

2. Yea, He who is the Sire of all, [our] Lord, and who alone is all, doth love to show Himself to all.

It is not by the place where he may be, nor by the quality which he may have, nor by the greatness which he may possess, but by the mind's intelligence alone, that He doth shed His light on man,—[on him] who shakes the clouds of Error from his soul, and sights the brilliancy of Truth, mingling himself with the All-sense of the Divine Intelligence; through love of which he wins his freedom from that part of him o'er which Death rules, and has the seed of the assurance of his future Deathlessness implanted in him.

3. This, then, is how the good will differ from the bad. Each several one will shine in piety, in sanctity, in prudence, in worship, and in service of [our] God, and see True Reason, as though [he looked at it] with [corporal] eyes; and each will by the confidence of his belief excel all other men, as by its light the Sun the other stars.

For that it is not so much by the greatness of his light as by his holiness and his divinity, the Sun himself lights up the other stars.

Yea, [my] Asclepius, thou should'st regard him as the second God, ruling all things, and giving light to all things living in the Cosmos, whether ensouled or unensouled.

For if the Cosmos is a living thing, and if it has been, and it is, and will be ever-living,—naught in the Cosmos is subject to death.

For of an ever-living thing, it is [the same] of every part which is; [that is,] that 'tis [as ever-living] as it is [itself]; and in the World itself [which is] for everyone, and at the self-same time an ever-living thing of life,—in it there is no place for death.

5. And so he should be the full store of life and deathlessness; if that it needs must be that he should live for ever.

And so the Sun, just as the Cosmos, lasts for aye. So is he, too, for ever ruler of [all] vital powers, or of [our] whole vitality; he is their ruler, or the one who gives them out.

God, then, is the eternal ruler of all living things, or vital functions, that are in the World. He is the everlasting giver-forth of Life itself.

Once for all [time] He hath bestowed Life on all vital powers; He further doth preserve them by a law that lasts for evermore, as I will [now] explain.

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The Perfect Sermon, or
The Asclepius
XXX

1. For in the very Life of the Eternity is Cosmos moved; and in the very Everlastingness of Life [itself] is Cosmic Space.

On which account it shall not stop at any time, nor shall it be destroyed; for that its very self is palisaded round about, and bound together as it were, by Living's Sempiternity.

Cosmos is [thus] Life-giver unto all that are in it, and is the Space of all that are in governance beneath the Sun.

The motion of the Cosmos in itself consisteth of a two-fold energy. 'Tis vivified itself from the without by the Eternity, and vivifies all things that are within, making all different, by numbers and by times, fixed and appointed [for them].

2. Now Time's distinguished on the Earth by quality of air, by variation of its heat and cold; in Heaven by the returnings of the stars to the same spots, the revolution of their course in Time.

And while the Cosmos is the home of Time, it is kept green [itself] by reason of Time's course and motion.

Time, on the other hand, is kept by regulation. Order and Time effect renewal of all things which are in Cosmos by means of alternation.

3. [XI. M.] All things, then, being thus, there's nothing stable, nothing fixed, nothing immoveable, of things that are being born, in Heaven or on the Earth.

Immoveable [is] God alone, and rightly [He] alone; for He Himself is in Himself, and by Himself, and round Himself, completely full and perfect.

He is His own immoveable stability. Nor by the pressure of some other one can He be moved, nor in the space [of anyone].

4. For in Him are all [spaces], and He Himself alone is in them all; unless someone should venture to assert that God's own motion's in Eternity; nay, rather, it is just Immoveable Eternity itself, back into which the motion of all times is funded, and out of which the motion of all times takes its beginning.

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The Perfect Sermon, or

The Asclepius

XXXI

1. God, then, hath [ever] been unchanging, and ever, in like fashion, with Himself hath the Eternity consisted,—having within itself Cosmos ingenerate, which we correctly call [God] Sensible.

Of that [transcendent] Deity this Image hath been made,—Cosmos the imitator of Eternity.

Time, further, hath the strength and nature of its own stability, in spite of its being in perpetual motion,—from its necessity of [ever] from itself reverting to itself.

2. And so, although Eternity is stable, motionless, and fixed, still, seeing that the movement of [this] Time (which is subject to motion) is ever being recalled into Eternity,—and for that reason Time's mobility is circular,—it comes to pass that the Eternity itself, although in its own self, is motionless, [yet] on account of Time, in which it is—(and it is in it),—it seems to be in movement as all motion.

So that it comes to pass, that both Eternity's stability becometh moved, and Time's mobility becometh stable.

So may we ever hold that God Himself is moved into Himself by [ever-] same transcendency of motion.

For that stability is in His vastness motion motionless; for by His vastness is [His] law exempt from change.

3. That, then, which so transcends, which is not subject unto sense, [which is] beyond all bounds, [and which] cannot be grasped,—That transcends all appraisement; That cannot be supported, nor borne up, nor can it be tracked out.

For where, and when, and whence, and how, and what, He is,—is known to none. For He's borne up by [His] supreme stability, and His stability is in Himself [alone],—whether

[this mystery] be God, or the Eternity, or both, or one in other, or both in either.

4. And for this cause, just as Eternity transcends the bounds of Time; so Time [itself], in that it cannot have bounds set to it by number, or by change, or by the period of the revolution of some second [kind of Time],—is of the nature of Eternity.

Both, then, seem boundless, both eternal. And so stability, though naturally fixed, yet seeing that it can sustain the things that are in motion,—because of all the good it does by reason of its firmness, deservedly doth hold the chiefest place.

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The Perfect Sermon, or

The Asclepius

XXXII

1. The principals of all that are, are, therefore, God and Æon.

The Cosmos, on the other hand, in that 'tis moveable, is not a principal.

For its mobility exceeds its own stability by treating the immoveable fixation as the law of everlasting movement.

The Whole Sense, then, of the Divinity, though like [to Him] in its own self immoveable, doth set itself in motion within its own stability.

'Tis holy, incorruptible, and everlasting, and if there can be any better attribute to give to it, ['tis its],—Eternity of God supreme, in Truth itself subsisting, the Fullness of all things, of Sense, and of the whole of Science, consisting, so to say, with God.

2. The Cosmic Sense is the container of all sensibles, [all] species, and [all] sciences.

The human [higher sense consists] in the retentiveness of memory, in that it can recall all things that it hath done.

For only just as far as the man-animal has the divinity of Sense descended; in that God hath not willed the highest Sense divine should be commingled with the rest of animals; lest it should blush for shame on being mingled with the other lives.

For whatsoever be the quality, or the extent, of the intelligence of a man's Sense, the whole of it consists in power of recollecting what is past.

It is through his retentiveness of memory, that man's been made the ruler of the earth.

3. Now the intelligence of Nature can be won by quality of Cosmic Sense,—from all the things in Cosmos which sense can perceive.

Concerning [this] Eternity, which is the second [one],—the Sense of this we get from out the senses' Cosmos, and we discern its quality [by the same means].

But the intelligence of Quality [itself], the “Whatness” of the Sense of God Supreme, is Truth alone,—of which [pure] Truth not even the most tenuous sketch, or [faintest] shade, in Cosmos is discerned.

For where is aught [of it] discerned by measurement of times,—wherein are seen untruths, and births [-and-deaths], and errors?

4. Thou seest, then, Asclepius, on what we are [already] founded, with what we occupy ourselves, and after what we dare to strive.

But unto Thee, O God most high, I give my thanks, in that Thou hast enlightened me with Light to see Divinity!

And ye, O Tat, Asclepius and Ammon, in silence hide the mysteries divine within the secret places of your hearts, and breathe no word of their concealment!

5. Now in our case the intellect doth differ from the sense in this,—that by the mind's extension intellect can reach to the intelligence and the discernment of the quality of Cosmic Sense.

The Intellect of Cosmos, on the other hand, extends to the Eternity and to the Gnosis of the Gods who are above itself.

And thus it comes to pass for men, that we perceive the things in Heaven, as it were through a mist, as far as the condition of the human sense allows.

'Tis true that the extension [of the mind] which we possess for the survey of such transcendent things, is very narrow [still]; but [it will be] most ample when it shall perceive with the felicity of [true] self-consciousness.

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The Perfect Sermon, or
The Asclepius
XXXIII

1. [XII. M.] Now on the subject of a "Void,"—which seems to almost all a thing of vast importance,—I hold the following view.

Naught is, naught could have been, naught ever will be void.

For all the members of the Cosmos are completely full; so that Cosmos itself is full and

[quite] complete with bodies, diverse in quality and form, possessing each its proper kind and size.

And of these bodies—one's greater than another, or another's less than is another, by difference of strength and size.

Of course, the stronger of them are more easily perceived, just as the larger [are]. The lesser ones, however, or the more minute, can scarcely be perceived, or not at all—those which we know are things [at all] by sense of touch alone.

Whence many come to think they are not bodies, and that there are void spaces,—which is impossible.

2. So also [for the Space] which is called Extra-cosmic,—if there be any (which I do not believe),—[then] is it filled by Him with things Intelligible, that is things of like nature with His own Divinity; just as this Cosmos which is called the Sensible, is fully filled with bodies and with animals, consonant with its proper nature and its quality;—[bodies] the proper shape of which we do not all behold, but [see] some large beyond their proper measure, some very small; either because of the great space which lies between [them and ourselves], or else because our sight is dull; so that they seem to us to be minute, or by the multitude are thought not to exist at all, because of their too great tenuity.

I mean the daimones, who, I believe, have their abode with us, and heroes, who abide between the purest part of air above us and the earth,—where it is ever cloudless, and no [movement from the] motion of a single star [disturbs the peace].

3. Because of this, Asclepius, thou shalt call nothing void; unless thou wilt declare of what that's void, which thou dost say is void;—for instance, void of fire, of water, or things like to these.

For if it should fall out, that it should seem that anything is able to be void of things like these,—though that which seemeth void be little or be big, it still cannot be void of spirit and of air.

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The Perfect Sermon, or

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XXXIV

1. In like way must we also talk concerning "Space,"—a term which by itself is void of "sense."

For Space seems what it is from that of which it is [the space]. For if the qualifying word is cut away, the sense is maimed.

Wherefore we shall [more] rightly say the space of water, space of fire, or [space] of things like these.

For as it is impossible that aught be void; so is Space also in itself not possible to be distinguished what it is.

For if you postulate a space without that [thing] of which it is [the space], it will appear to be void space,—which I do not believe exists in Cosmos.

2. If nothing, then, is void, so also Space by its own self does not show what it is unless you add to it lengths, breadths [and depths],—just as you add the proper marks unto men's bodies.

These things, then, being thus, Asclepius, and ye who are with [him],—know the Intelligible Cosmos (that is, [the one] which is discerned by contemplation of the mind alone) is bodiless; nor can aught corporal be mingled with its nature,—[by corporal I mean] what can be known by quality, by quantity, and numbers. For there is nothing of this kind in that.

3. This Cosmos, then, which is called Sensible, is the receptacle of all things sensible,—of species, qualities, or bodies.

But not a single one of these can quicken without God. For God is all, and by Him [are] all things, and all [are] of His Will.

For that He is all Goodness, Fitness, Wisdom, unchangeable,—that can be sensed and understood by His own self alone.

Without Him naught hath been, nor is, nor will be.

4. For all things are from Him, in Him, and through Him,—both multitudinous qualities, and mighty quantities, and magnitudes exceeding every means of measurement, and species of all forms;—which things, if thou should'st understand, Asclepius, thou wilt give thanks to God.

And if thou should'st observe it as a whole, thou wilt be taught, by means of the True Reason, that Cosmos in itself is knowable to sense, and that all things in it are wrapped as in a vesture by that Higher Cosmos [spoken of above].

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The Perfect Sermon, or

The Asclepius

XXXV

1. Now every single class of living thing, Asclepius, of whatsoever kind, or it be mortal or

be rational, whether it be endowed with soul, or be without one, just as each has its class, so does each several [class] have images of its own class.

And though each separate class of animal has in it every form of its own class, still in the selfsame [kind of] form the units differ from each other.

And so although the class of men is of one kind, so that a man can be distinguished by his [general] look, still individual men within the sameness of their [common] form do differ from each other.

2. For the idea which is divine, is bodiless, and is whatever is grasped by the mind.

So that although these two, from which the general form and body are derived, are bodiless, it is impossible that any single form should be produced exactly like another,—because the moments of the hours and points of inclination [when they're born] are different.

But they are changed as many times as there are moments in the hour of that revolving Circle in which abides that God whom we have called All-formed.

3. The species, then, persists, as frequently producing from itself as many images, and as diverse, as there are moments in the Cosmic Revolution,—a Cosmos which doth [ever] change in revolution. But the idea [itself] is neither changed nor turned.

So are the forms of every single genus permanent, [and yet] dissimilar in the same [general] form.

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The Perfect Sermon, or
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XXXVI

1. Asc. And does the Cosmos have a species, O Thrice-greatest one?

Tris. Dost not thou see, Asclepius, that all has been explained to thee as though to one asleep?

For what is Cosmos, or of what doth it consist, if not of all things born?

This, then, you may assert of heaven, and earth, and elements. For though the other things possess more frequent change of species, [still even] heaven, [by its] becoming moist, or dry, or cold, or hot, or clear, or dull, [all] in one kind of heaven,—these [too] are frequent changes into species.

2. Earth hath, moreover, always many changes in its species;—both when she brings

forth fruits, and when she also nourishes her bringings-forth with the return of all the fruits; the diverse qualities and quantities of air, its stoppings and its flowings; and before all the qualities of trees, of flowers, and berries, of scents, of savours—species.

Fire [also] brings about most numerous conversions, and divine. For these are all-formed images of Sun and Moon; they're, as it were, like our own mirrors, which with their emulous resplendence give us back the likenesses of our own images.

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The Perfect Sermon, or

The Asclepius

XXXVII

1. [XIII. M.] But now let this suffice about such things; and let us once again return to man and reason,—gift divine, from which man has the name of rational animal.

Less to be wondered at are the things said of man,—though they are [still] to be admired. Nay, of all marvels that which wins our wonder [most] is that man has been able to find out the nature of the Gods and bring it into play.

2. Since, then, our earliest progenitors were in great error,—seeing they had no rational faith about the Gods, and that they paid no heed unto their cult and holy worship,—they chanced upon an art whereby they made Gods [for themselves].

To this invention they conjoined a power that suited it, [derived] from cosmic nature; and blending these together, since souls they could not make, [they set about] evoking daimons' souls or those of angels; [and thus] attached them to their sacred images and holy mysteries, so that the statues should, by means of these, possess the powers of doing good and the reverse.

3. For thy forebear, Asclepius, the first discoverer of medicine, to whom there is a temple hallowed on Libya's Mount, hard by the shore of crocodiles, in which his cosmic man reposes, that is to say his body; for that the rest [of him], or better still, the whole (if that a man when wholly [plunged] in consciousness of life, be better), hath gone back home to heaven,—still furnishing, [but] now by his divinity, the sick with all the remedies which he was wont in days gone by to give by art of medicine.

4. Hermes, which is the name of my forebear, whose home is in a place called after him, doth aid and guard all mortal [men] who come to him from every side.

As for Osiris' [spouse]; how many are the blessings that we know Isis bestows when she's propitious; how many does she injure when she's wrath!

For that the terrene and the cosmic Gods are easily enraged, in that they are created and composed of the two natures.

5. And for this cause it comes to pass that these are called the “sacred animals” by the Egyptians, and that each several state gives service to the souls of those whose souls have been made holy, while they were still alive; so that [the several states] are governed by the laws [of their peculiar sacred animals], and called after their names.

It is because of this, Asclepius, those [animals] which are considered by some states deserving of their worship, in others are thought otherwise; and on account of this the states of the Egyptians wage with each other frequent war.

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The Perfect Sermon, or

The Asclepius

XXXVIII

1. Asc. And of what nature, O Thrice-greatest one, may be the quality of those who are considered terrene Gods?

Tris. It doth consist, Asclepius, of plants, and stones, and spices, which contain the nature of [their own] divinity.

And for this cause they are delighted with repeated sacrifice, with hymns, and lauds, and sweetest sounds, tuned to the key of Heaven's harmonious song.

2. So that what is of heavenly nature, being drawn down into the images by means of heavenly use and practices, may be enabled to endure with joy the nature of mankind, and sojourn with it for long periods of time.

Thus is it that man is the maker of the Gods.

3. But do not, O Asclepius, I pray thee, think the doings of the terrene Gods are the result of chance.

The heavenly Gods dwell in the heights of Heaven, each filling up and watching o'er the rank he hath received; whereas these Gods of ours, each in its way,—by looking after certain things, foretelling others by oracles and prophecy, foreseeing others, and duly helping them along,—act as allies of men, as though they were our relatives and friends.

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The Perfect Sermon, or
The Asclepius
XXXIX

1. [XIV. M.] Asc. What part of the economy, Thrice-greatest one, does the Heimarmenē, or Fate, then occupy? For do not the celestial Gods rule over generals; the terrene occupy particulars?

Tris. That which we call Heimarmenē, Asclepius, is the necessity of all things that are born, bound ever to themselves with interlinked enchainments.

This, then, is either the effector of all things, or it is highest God, or what is made the second God by God Himself,—or else the discipline of all things both in heaven and on earth, established by the laws of the Divine.

2. And so these twain, Fate and Necessity, are bound to one another mutually by inseparable cohesion.

The former of them, the Heimarmenē, gives birth to the beginnings of all things; Necessity compels the end of [all] depending from these principals.

On these doth Order follow, that is their warp-and-woof, and Time's arrangement for the perfecting of [all] things. For there is naught without the interblend of Order.

That Cosmos is made perfect in all things; for Cosmos' self is vehicled in Order, or totally consists of Order.

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The Perfect Sermon, or
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XL

1. So, then, these three, Fate, [and] Necessity, [and] Order, are most immediately effected by God's Will, who rules the Cosmos by His Law and by His Holy Reason.

From these, accordingly, all willing or not-willing is altogether foreign, according to God's Will.

They are not moved by wrath nor swayed by favour, but are the instruments of the Eternal Reason's self-compulsion, which is [the Reason] of Eternity, that never can be turned aside, or changed, or be destroyed.

2. First, then, is Fate, which, as it were, by casting in the seed, supplies the embryo of all that are to be.

Follows Necessity, whereby they all are forcibly compelled unto their end.

Third, Order [comes], preserving warp-and-woof of [all] the things which Fate and

[which] Necessity arrange.

This, then, is the Eternity, which neither doth begin nor cease to be, which, fixed by law unchangeable, abides in the unceasing motion of its course.

3. It rises and it sets, by turns, throughout its limbs; so that by reason of Time's changes it often rises with the very limbs with which it [once] had set.

For [its] sphericity,—its law of revolution,—is of this nature, that all things are so straitly joined to their own selves, that no one knoweth what is the beginning of their revolution; since they appear for ever all to go before and follow after their own selves.

Good and bad issues, [therefore,] are commingled in all cosmic things.

4. [XV. M.] And now it hath been told you on each several point,—as man hath power [to tell], and God hath willed it and permitted it.

This, then, alone remains that we should do,—bless God and give Him praise; and so return to taking thought for body ['s comfort].

For now sufficiently have we been filled with feast of mind by our discourse on sacred things.

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The Perfect Sermon, or
The Asclepius
XLI

1. Now when they came forth from the holy place, they turned their faces towards the south when they began their prayers to God.

For when the sun is setting, should anyone desire to pray to God, he ought to turn him thitherwards; so also at the rising of the same, unto that spot which lies beneath the sun.

As they were just beginning to recite the prayer, Asclepius did whisper:

[Asc.] Let us suggest to father, Tat,—what he did bid us do,—that we should say our prayer to God with added incense and with unguents.

Whom when Thrice-greatest heard, he grew distressed and said:

2. [Tris.] Nay, nay, Asclepius; speak more propitious words! For this is like to profanation of [our] sacred rites,—when thou dost pray to God, to offer incense and the rest.

For naught is there of which He stands in need, in that He is all things, or all are in Him.

But let us worship, pouring forth our thanks. For this is the best incense in God's sight,—when thanks are given to Him by men.

3. [We give] Thee grace, Thou highest [and] most excellent! For by Thy Grace we have received the so great Light of Thy own Gnosis.

O holy Name, fit [Name] to be adored, O Name unique, by which the Only God is to be blest through worship of [our] Sire,—[of Thee] who deignest to afford to all a Father's piety, and care, and love, and whatsoever virtue is more sweet [than these], endowing [us] with sense, [and] reason, [and] intelligence;—with sense that we may feel Thee; with reason that we may track Thee out from the appearances of things; with means of recognition that we may joy in knowing Thee.

4. Saved by Thy Power divine, let us rejoice that Thou hast shown Thyself to us in all Thy Fullness. Let us rejoice that Thou hast deigned to consecrate us, [still] entombed in bodies, to Eternity.

For this is the sole festival of praise worthy of man,—to know Thy Majesty.

We have known Thee; yea, by the Single Sense of our intelligence, we have perceived Thy Light supreme,—O Thou true Life of life, O Fecund Womb that giveth birth to every nature!

5. We have known Thee, O Thou completely filled with the Conception from Thyself of Universal Nature!

We have known Thee, O Thou Eternal Constancy!

For in the whole of this our prayer in worship of Thy Good, this favour only of Thy Goodness do we crave;—that Thou wilt keep us constant in our Love of knowing Thee, and let us ne'er be cut off from this kind of Life.

With this desire we [now] betake us to [our] pure and fleshless meal.

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Symposium by Plato

Symposium
by Plato

Written circa 360 B.C.

translated by Benjamin Jowett PERSONS OF THE DIALOGUE: APOLLODORUS, who repeats to his companion the dialogue which he had heard from Aristodemus, and had already once narrated to Glaucon; PHAEDRUS; PAUSANIAS; ERYXIMACHUS; ARISTOPHANES; AGATHON; SOCRATES; ALCIBIADES; A TROOP OF REVELLERS.

Scene: The House of Agathon. Concerning the things about which you ask to be informed I believe that I am not ill-prepared with an answer. For the day before yesterday I was coming from my own home at Phalerum to the city, and one of my acquaintance, who had caught a sight of me from behind, hind, out playfully in the distance, said: Apollodorus, O thou Phalerian man, halt! So I did as I was bid; and then he said, I was looking for you, Apollodorus, only just now, that I might ask you about the speeches in praise of love, which were delivered by Socrates, Alcibiades, and others, at Agathon's supper. Phoenix, the son of Philip, told another person who told me of them;

his narrative was very indistinct, but he said that you knew, and I wish that you would give me an account of them. Who, if not you, should be the reporter of the words of your friend? And first tell me, he said, were you present at this meeting?

Your informant, Glaucon, I said, must have been very indistinct indeed, if you imagine that the occasion was recent; or that I could have been of the party.

Why, yes, he replied, I thought so.

Impossible: I said. Are you ignorant that for many years Agathon has not resided at Athens; and not three have elapsed since I became acquainted with Socrates, and have made it my daily business to know all that he says and does. There was a time when I was running about the world, fancying myself to be well employed, but I was really a most wretched thing, no better than you are now. I thought that I ought to do anything rather than be a philosopher.

Well, he said, jesting apart, tell me when the meeting occurred.

In our boyhood, I replied, when Agathon won the prize with his first tragedy, on the day after that on which he and his chorus offered the sacrifice of victory.

Then it must have been a long while ago, he said; and who told you-did Socrates?

No indeed, I replied, but the same person who told Phoenix;-he was a little fellow, who never wore any shoes Aristodemus, of the deme of Cydathenaeum. He had been at Agathon's feast; and I think that in those days there was no one who was a more devoted admirer of Socrates. Moreover, I have asked Socrates about the truth of some parts of his narrative, and he confirmed them. Then, said Glaucon, let us have the tale over again; is not the road to Athens just made for conversation? And so we walked, and talked of the discourses on love; and therefore, as I said at first, I am not ill-prepared to comply with your request, and will have another rehearsal of them if you like. For to speak or to hear others speak of philosophy always gives me the greatest pleasure, to say nothing of the profit. But when I hear another strain, especially that of you rich men and traders, such conversation displeases me; and I pity you who are my companions, because you think that you are doing something when in reality you are doing nothing. And I dare say that you pity me in return, whom you regard as an unhappy creature, and very probably you are right. But I certainly know of you what you only think of me-there is the difference.

Companion. I see, Apollodorus, that you are just the same-always speaking evil of yourself, and of others; and I do believe that you pity all mankind, with the exception of Socrates, yourself first of all, true in this to your old name, which, however deserved I know how you acquired, of Apollodorus the madman; for you are always raging against yourself and everybody but Socrates.

Apollodorus. Yes, friend, and the reason why I am said to be mad, and out of my wits, is just because I have these notions of myself and you; no other evidence is required.

Com. No more of that, Apollodorus; but let me renew my request that you would repeat the conversation.

Apoll. Well, the tale of love was on this wise:-But perhaps I had better begin at the beginning, and endeavour to give you the exact words of Aristodemus:

He said that he met Socrates fresh from the bath and sandalled; and as the sight of the sandals was unusual, he asked him whither he was going that he had been converted into such a beau:-

To a banquet at Agathon's, he replied, whose invitation to his sacrifice of victory I refused yesterday, fearing a crowd, but promising that I would come to-day instead; and so I have put on my finery, because he is such a fine man. What say you to going with me unasked?

I will do as you bid me, I replied.

Follow then, he said, and let us demolish the proverb:

To the feasts of inferior men the good unbidden go; instead of which our proverb will run:-

To the feasts of the good the good unbidden go; and this alteration may be supported by the authority of Homer himself, who not only demolishes but literally outrages the proverb. For, after picturing Agamemnon as the most valiant of men, he makes Menelaus, who is but a fainthearted warrior, come unbidden to the banquet of Agamemnon, who is feasting and offering sacrifices, not the better to the worse, but the worse to the better.

I rather fear, Socrates, said Aristodemus, lest this may still be my case; and that, like Menelaus in Homer, I shall be the inferior person, who

To the feasts of the wise unbidden goes. But I shall say that I was bidden of you, and then you will have to make an excuse.

Two going together, he replied, in Homeric fashion, one or other of them may invent an excuse by the way.

This was the style of their conversation as they went along. Socrates dropped behind in a fit of abstraction, and desired Aristodemus, who was waiting, to go on before him. When he reached the house of Agathon he found the doors wide open, and a comical thing happened. A servant coming out met him, and led him at once into the banqueting-hall in which the guests were reclining, for the banquet was about to begin. Welcome, Aristodemus, said Agathon, as soon as he appeared-you are just in time to sup with us; if you come on any other matter put it off, and make one of us, as I was looking for you yesterday and meant to have asked you, if I could have found you. But

what have you done with Socrates?

I turned round, but Socrates was nowhere to be seen; and I had to explain that he had been with me a moment before, and that I came by his invitation to the supper.

You were quite right in coming, said Agathon; but where is he himself?

He was behind me just now, as I entered, he said, and I cannot think what has become of him.

Go and look for him, boy, said Agathon, and bring him in; and do you, Aristodemus, meanwhile take the place by Eryximachus.

The servant then assisted him to wash, and he lay down, and presently another servant came in and reported that our friend Socrates had retired into the portico of the neighbouring house. "There he is fixed," said he, "and when I call to him he will not stir."

How strange, said Agathon; then you must call him again, and keep calling him.

Let him alone, said my informant; he has a way of stopping anywhere and losing himself without any reason. I believe that he will soon appear; do not therefore disturb him.

Well, if you think so, I will leave him, said Agathon. And then, turning to the servants, he added, "Let us have supper without waiting for him. Serve up whatever you please, for there; is no one to give you orders; hitherto I have never left you to yourselves. But on this occasion imagine that you are our hosts, and that I and the company are your guests; treat us well, and then we shall commend you." After this, supper was served, but still no-Socrates; and during the meal Agathon several times expressed a wish to send for him, but Aristodemus objected; and at last when the feast was about half over-for the fit, as usual, was not of long duration-Socrates entered; Agathon, who was reclining alone at the end of the table, begged that he would take the place next to him; that "I may touch you," he said, "and have the benefit of that wise thought which came into your mind in the portico, and is now in your possession; for I am certain that you would not have come away until you had found what you sought."

How I wish, said Socrates, taking his place as he was desired, that wisdom could be infused by touch, out of the fuller the emptier man, as water runs through wool out of a fuller cup into an emptier one; if that were so, how greatly should I value the privilege of reclining at your side! For you would have filled me full with a stream of wisdom plenteous and fair; whereas my own is of a very mean and questionable sort, no better than a dream. But yours is bright and full of promise, and was manifested forth in all the splendour of youth the day before yesterday, in the presence of more than thirty thousand Hellenes.

You are mocking, Socrates, said Agathon, and ere long you and I will have to determine who bears off the palm of wisdom-of this Dionysus shall be the judge; but at present you are better occupied with supper.

Socrates took his place on the couch, and supped with the rest; and then libations were offered, and after a hymn had been sung to the god, and there had been the usual ceremonies, they were about to commence drinking, when Pausanias said, And now, my friends, how can we drink with least injury to ourselves? I can assure you that I feel severely the effect of yesterday's potations, and must have time to recover; and I suspect that most of you are in the same predicament, for you were of the party yesterday. Consider then: How can the drinking be made easiest?

I entirely agree, said Aristophanes, that we should, by all means, avoid hard drinking, for I was myself one of those who were yesterday drowned in drink.

I think that you are right, said Eryximachus, the son of Acumenus; but I should still like to hear one other person speak: Is Agathon able to drink hard?

I am not equal to it, said Agathon.

Then, the Eryximachus, the weak heads like myself, Aristodemus, Phaedrus, and others who never can drink, are fortunate in finding that the stronger ones are not in a drinking mood. (I do not include Socrates, who is able either to drink or to abstain, and will not mind, whichever we do.) Well, as of none of the company seem disposed to drink much, I may be forgiven for saying, as a physician, that drinking deep is a bad practice, which I never follow, if I can help, and certainly do not recommend to another, least of all to any one who still feels the effects of yesterday's carouse.

I always do what you advise, and especially what you prescribe as a physician, rejoined Phaedrus the Myrrhinusian, and the rest of the company, if they are wise, will do the same.

It was agreed that drinking was not to be the order of the day, but that they were all to drink only so much as they pleased.

Then, said Eryximachus, as you are all agreed that drinking is to be voluntary, and that there is to be no compulsion, I move, in the next place, that the flute-girl, who has just made her appearance, be told to go away and play to herself, or, if she likes, to the women who are within. To-day let us have conversation instead; and, if you will allow me, I will tell you what sort of conversation. This proposal having been accepted, Eryximachus proceeded as follows:-

I will begin, he said, after the manner of Melanippe in Euripides,

Not mine the word which I am about to speak, but that of Phaedrus. For often he says to me in an indignant tone: "What a strange thing it is, Eryximachus, that, whereas other gods have poems and hymns made in their honour, the great and glorious god, Love, has no encomiast among all the poets who are so many. There are the worthy sophists too-the excellent Prodicus for example, who have descanted in prose on the virtues of Heracles and other heroes; and, what is still more extraordinary, I have met with a

philosophical work in which the utility of salt has been made the theme of an eloquent discourse; and many other like things have had a like honour bestowed upon them. And only to think that there should have been an eager interest created about them, and yet that to this day no one has ever dared worthily to hymn Love's praises! So entirely has this great deity been neglected." Now in this Phaedrus seems to me to be quite right, and therefore I want to offer him a contribution; also I think that at the present moment we who are here assembled cannot do better than honour the god Love. If you agree with me, there will be no lack of conversation; for I mean to propose that each of us in turn, going from left to right, shall make a speech in honour of Love. Let him give us the best which he can; and Phaedrus, because he is sitting first on the left hand, and because he is the father of the thought, shall begin.

No one will vote against you, Eryximachus, said Socrates. How can I oppose your motion, who profess to understand nothing but matters of love; nor, I presume, will Agathon and Pausanias; and there can be no doubt of Aristophanes, whose whole concern is with Dionysus and Aphrodite; nor will any one disagree of those whom I, see around me. The proposal, as I am aware, may seem rather hard upon us whose place is last; but we shall be contented if we hear some good speeches first. Let Phaedrus begin the praise of Love, and good luck to him. All the company expressed their assent, and desired him to do as Socrates bade him.

Aristodemus did not recollect all that was said, nor do I recollect all that he related to me; but I will tell you what I thought most worthy of remembrance, and what the chief speakers said.

Phaedrus began by affirming that love is a mighty god, and wonderful among gods and men, but especially wonderful in his birth. For he is the eldest of the gods, which is an honour to him; and a proof of his claim to this honour is, that of his parents there is no memorial; neither poet nor prose-writer has ever affirmed that he had any. As Hesiod says:

First Chaos came, and then broad-bosomed Earth,

The everlasting seat of all that is,

And Love. In other words, after Chaos, the Earth and Love, these two, came into being. Also Parmenides sings of Generation:

First in the train of gods, he fashioned Love. And Acusilaus agrees with Hesiod. Thus numerous are the witnesses who acknowledge Love to be the eldest of the gods. And not only is he the eldest, he is also the source of the greatest benefits to us. For I know not any greater blessing to a young man who is beginning life than a virtuous lover or to the lover than a beloved youth. For the principle which ought to be the guide of men who would nobly live at principle, I say, neither kindred, nor honour, nor wealth, nor any other motive is able to implant so well as love. Of what am I speaking? Of the sense of honour and dishonour, without which neither states nor individuals ever do any good or great work. And I say that a lover who is detected in doing any dishonourable act, or

submitting through cowardice when any dishonour is done to him by another, will be more pained at being detected by his beloved than at being seen by his father, or by his companions, or by any one else. The beloved too, when he is found in any disgraceful situation, has the same feeling about his lover. And if there were only some way of contriving that a state or an army should be made up of lovers and their loves, they would be the very best governors of their own city, abstaining from all dishonour, and emulating one another in honour; and when fighting at each other's side, although a mere handful, they would overcome the world. For what lover would not choose rather to be seen by all mankind than by his beloved, either when abandoning his post or throwing away his arms? He would be ready to die a thousand deaths rather than endure this. Or who would desert his beloved or fail him in the hour of danger? The veriest coward would become an inspired hero, equal to the bravest, at such a time; Love would inspire him. That courage which, as Homer says, the god breathes into the souls of some heroes, Love of his own nature infuses into the lover.

Love will make men dare to die for their beloved-love alone; and women as well as men. Of this, Alcestis, the daughter of Pelias, is a monument to all Hellas; for she was willing to lay down her life on behalf of her husband, when no one else would, although he had a father and mother; but the tenderness of her love so far exceeded theirs, that she made them seem to be strangers in blood to their own son, and in name only related to him; and so noble did this action of hers appear to the gods, as well as to men, that among the many who have done virtuously she is one of the very few to whom, in admiration of her noble action, they have granted the privilege of returning alive to earth; such exceeding honour is paid by the gods to the devotion and virtue of love. But Orpheus, the son of Oeagrus, the harper, they sent empty away, and presented to him an apparition only of her whom he sought, but herself they would not give up, because he showed no spirit; he was only a harp-player, and did not dare like Alcestis to die for love, but was contriving how he might enter hades alive; moreover, they afterwards caused him to suffer death at the hands of women, as the punishment of his cowardliness. Very different was the reward of the true love of Achilles towards his lover Patroclus-his lover and not his love (the notion that Patroclus was the beloved one is a foolish error into which Aeschylus has fallen, for Achilles was surely the fairer of the two, fairer also than all the other heroes; and, as Homer informs us, he was still beardless, and younger far). And greatly as the gods honour the virtue of love, still the return of love on the part of the beloved to the lover is more admired and valued and rewarded by them, for the lover is more divine; because he is inspired by God. Now Achilles was quite aware, for he had been told by his mother, that he might avoid death and return home, and live to a good old age, if he abstained from slaying Hector. Nevertheless he gave his life to revenge his friend, and dared to die, not only in his defence, but after he was dead Wherefore the gods honoured him even above Alcestis, and sent him to the Islands of the Blest. These are my reasons for affirming that Love is the eldest and noblest and mightiest of the gods; and the chiefest author and giver of virtue in life, and of happiness after death.

This, or something like this, was the speech of Phaedrus; and some other speeches followed which Aristodemus did not remember; the next which he repeated was that of Pausanias. Phaedrus, he said, the argument has not been set before us, I think, quite in

the right form;-we should not be called upon to praise Love in such an indiscriminate manner. If there were only one Love, then what you said would be well enough; but since there are more Loves than one,-should have begun by determining which of them was to be the theme of our praises. I will amend this defect; and first of all I would tell you which Love is deserving of praise, and then try to hymn the praiseworthy one in a manner worthy of him. For we all know that Love is inseparable from Aphrodite, and if there were only one Aphrodite there would be only one Love; but as there are two goddesses there must be two Loves.

And am I not right in asserting that there are two goddesses? The elder one, having no mother, who is called the heavenly Aphrodite-she is the daughter of Uranus; the younger, who is the daughter of Zeus and Dione-her we call common; and the Love who is her fellow-worker is rightly named common, as the other love is called heavenly. All the gods ought to have praise given to them, but not without distinction of their natures; and therefore I must try to distinguish the characters of the two Loves. Now actions vary according to the manner of their performance. Take, for example, that which we are now doing, drinking, singing and talking these actions are not in themselves either good or evil, but they turn out in this or that way according to the mode of performing them; and when well done they are good, and when wrongly done they are evil; and in like manner not every love, but only that which has a noble purpose, is noble and worthy of praise. The Love who is the offspring of the common Aphrodite is essentially common, and has no discrimination, being such as the meaner sort of men feel, and is apt to be of women as well as of youths, and is of the body rather than of the soul-the most foolish beings are the objects of this love which desires only to gain an end, but never thinks of accomplishing the end nobly, and therefore does good and evil quite indiscriminately. The goddess who is his mother is far younger than the other, and she was born of the union of the male and female, and partakes of both.

But the offspring of the heavenly Aphrodite is derived from a mother in whose birth the female has no part,-she is from the male only; this is that love which is of youths, and the goddess being older, there is nothing of wantonness in her. Those who are inspired by this love turn to the male, and delight in him who is the more valiant and intelligent nature; any one may recognise the pure enthusiasts in the very character of their attachments. For they love not boys, but intelligent, beings whose reason is beginning to be developed, much about the time at which their beards begin to grow. And in choosing young men to be their companions, they mean to be faithful to them, and pass their whole life in company with them, not to take them in their inexperience, and deceive them, and play the fool with them, or run away from one to another of them. But the love of young boys should be forbidden by law, because their future is uncertain; they may turn out good or bad, either in body or soul, and much noble enthusiasm may be thrown away upon them; in this matter the good are a law to themselves, and the coarser sort of lovers ought to be restrained by force; as we restrain or attempt to restrain them from fixing their affections on women of free birth. These are the persons who bring a reproach on love; and some have been led to deny the lawfulness of such attachments because they see the impropriety and evil of them; for surely nothing that is decorously and lawfully done can justly be censured.

Now here and in Lacedaemon the rules about love are perplexing, but in most cities they are simple and easily intelligible; in Elis and Boeotia, and in countries having no gifts of eloquence, they are very straightforward; the law is simply in favour of these connexions, and no one, whether young or old, has anything to say to their discredit; the reason being, as I suppose, that they are men of few words in those parts, and therefore the lovers do not like the trouble of pleading their suit. In Ionia and other places, and generally in countries which are subject to the barbarians, the custom is held to be dishonourable; loves of youths share the evil repute in which philosophy and gymnastics are held because they are inimical to tyranny; for the interests of rulers require that their subjects should be poor in spirit and that there should be no strong bond of friendship or society among them, which love, above all other motives, is likely to inspire, as our Athenian tyrants-learned by experience; for the love of Aristogeiton and the constancy of Harmodius had strength which undid their power. And, therefore, the ill-repute into which these attachments have fallen is to be ascribed to the evil condition of those who make them to be ill-reputed; that is to say, to the self-seeking of the governors and the cowardice of the governed; on the other hand, the indiscriminate honour which is given to them in some countries is attributable to the laziness of those who hold this opinion of them. In our own country a far better principle prevails, but, as I was saying, the explanation of it is rather perplexing. For, observe that open loves are held to be more honourable than secret ones, and that the love of the noblest and highest, even if their persons are less beautiful than others, is especially honourable.

Consider, too, how great is the encouragement which all the world gives to the lover; neither is he supposed to be doing anything dishonourable; but if he succeeds he is praised, and if he fail he is blamed. And in the pursuit of his love the custom of mankind allows him to do many strange things, which philosophy would bitterly censure if they were done from any motive of interest, or wish for office or power. He may pray, and entreat, and supplicate, and swear, and lie on a mat at the door, and endure a slavery worse than that of any slave-in any other case friends and enemies would be equally ready to prevent him, but now there is no friend who will be ashamed of him and admonish him, and no enemy will charge him with meanness or flattery; the actions of a lover have a grace which ennobles them; and custom has decided that they are highly commendable and that there no loss of character in them; and, what is strangest of all, he only may swear and forswear himself (so men say), and the gods will forgive his transgression, for there is no such thing as a lover's oath. Such is the entire liberty which gods and men have allowed the lover, according to the custom which prevails in our part of the world. From this point of view a man fairly argues in Athens to love and to be loved is held to be a very honourable thing. But when parents forbid their sons to talk with their lovers, and place them under a tutor's care, who is appointed to see to these things, and their companions and equals cast in their teeth anything of the sort which they may observe, and their elders refuse to silence the reprovers and do not rebuke them-any one who reflects on all this will, on the contrary, think that we hold these practices to be most disgraceful. But, as I was saying at first, the truth as I imagine is, that whether such practices are honourable or whether they are dishonourable is not a simple question; they are honourable to him who follows them honourably, dishonourable to him who follows them dishonourably. There is dishonour in yielding to

the evil, or in an evil manner; but there is honour in yielding to the good, or in an honourable manner.

Evil is the vulgar lover who loves the body rather than the soul, inasmuch as he is not even stable, because he loves a thing which is in itself unstable, and therefore when the bloom of youth which he was desiring is over, he takes wing and flies away, in spite of all his words and promises; whereas the love of the noble disposition is life-long, for it becomes one with the everlasting. The custom of our country would have both of them proven well and truly, and would have us yield to the one sort of lover and avoid the other, and therefore encourages some to pursue, and others to fly; testing both the lover and beloved in contests and trials, until they show to which of the two classes they respectively belong. And this is the reason why, in the first place, a hasty attachment is held to be dishonourable, because time is the true test of this as of most other things; and secondly there is a dishonour in being overcome by the love of money, or of wealth, or of political power, whether a man is frightened into surrender by the loss of them, or, having experienced the benefits of money and political corruption, is unable to rise above the seductions of them. For none of these things are of a permanent or lasting nature; not to mention that no generous friendship ever sprang from them. There remains, then, only one way of honourable attachment which custom allows in the beloved, and this is the way of virtue; for as we admitted that any service which the lover does to him is not to be accounted flattery or a dishonour to himself, so the beloved has one way only of voluntary service which is not dishonourable, and this is virtuous service.

For we have a custom, and according to our custom any one who does service to another under the idea that he will be improved by him either in wisdom, or, in some other particular of virtue-such a voluntary service, I say, is not to be regarded as a dishonour, and is not open to the charge of flattery. And these two customs, one the love of youth, and the other the practice of philosophy and virtue in general, ought to meet in one, and then the beloved may honourably indulge the lover. For when the lover and beloved come together, having each of them a law, and the lover thinks that he is right in doing any service which he can to his gracious loving one; and the other that he is right in showing any kindness which he can to him who is making him wise and good; the one capable of communicating wisdom and virtue, the other seeking to acquire them with a view to education and wisdom, when the two laws of love are fulfilled and meet in one-then, and then only, may the beloved yield with honour to the lover. Nor when love is of this disinterested sort is there any disgrace in being deceived, but in every other case there is equal disgrace in being or not being deceived. For he who is gracious to his lover under the impression that he is rich, and is disappointed of his gains because he turns out to be poor, is disgraced all the same: for he has done his best to show that he would give himself up to any one's "uses base" for the sake of money; but this is not honourable. And on the same principle he who gives himself to a lover because he is a good man, and in the hope that he will be improved by his company, shows himself to be virtuous, even though the object of his affection turn out to be a villain, and to have no virtue; and if he is deceived he has committed a noble error. For he has proved that for his part he will do anything for anybody with a view to virtue and improvement, than which there can be nothing nobler. Thus noble in every case is the acceptance of

another for the sake of virtue. This is that love which is the love of the heavenly goddess, and is heavenly, and of great price to individuals and cities, making the lover and the beloved alike eager in the work of their own improvement. But all other loves are the offspring of the other, who is the common goddess. To you, Phaedrus, I offer this my contribution in praise of love, which is as good as I could make extempore.

Pausanias came to a pause-this is the balanced way in which I have been taught by the wise to speak; and Aristodemus said that the turn of Aristophanes was next, but either he had eaten too much, or from some other cause he had the hiccough, and was obliged to change turns with Eryximachus the physician, who was reclining on the couch below him. Eryximachus, he said, you ought either to stop my hiccough, or to speak in my turn until I have left off.

I will do both, said Eryximachus: I will speak in your turn, and do you speak in mine; and while I am speaking let me recommend you to hold your breath, and if after you have done so for some time the hiccough is no better, then gargle with a little water; and if it still continues, tickle your nose with something and sneeze; and if you sneeze once or twice, even the most violent hiccough is sure to go. I will do as you prescribe, said Aristophanes, and now get on.

Eryximachus spoke as follows: Seeing that Pausanias made a fair beginning, and but a lame ending, I must endeavour to supply his deficiency. I think that he has rightly distinguished two kinds of love. But my art further informs me that the double love is not merely an affection of the soul of man towards the fair, or towards anything, but is to be found in the bodies of all animals and in productions of the earth, and I may say in all that is; such is the conclusion which I seem to have gathered from my own art of medicine, whence I learn how great and wonderful and universal is the deity of love, whose empire extends over all things, divine as well as human. And from medicine I would begin that I may do honour to my art. There are in the human body these two kinds of love, which are confessedly different and unlike, and being unlike, they have loves and desires which are unlike; and the desire of the healthy is one, and the desire of the diseased is another; and as Pausanias was just now saying that to indulge good men is honourable, and bad men dishonourable:-so too in the body the good and healthy elements are to be indulged, and the bad elements and the elements of disease are not to be indulged, but discouraged. And this is what the physician has to do, and in this the art of medicine consists: for medicine may be regarded generally as the knowledge of the loves and desires of the body, and how to satisfy them or not; and the best physician is he who is able to separate fair love from foul, or to convert one into the other; and he who knows how to eradicate and how to implant love, whichever is required, and can reconcile the most hostile elements in the constitution and make them loving friends, is skilful practitioner. Now the: most hostile are the most opposite, such as hot and cold, bitter and sweet, moist and dry, and the like. And my ancestor, Asclepius, knowing how-to implant friendship and accord in these elements, was the creator of our art, as our friends the poets here tell us, and I believe them; and not only medicine in every branch but the arts of gymnastic and husbandry are under his dominion.

Any one who pays the least attention to the subject will also perceive that in music there is the same reconciliation of opposites; and I suppose that this must have been the meaning, of Heracleitus, although, his words are not accurate, for he says that is united by disunion, like the harmony-of bow and the lyre. Now there is an absurdity saying that harmony is discord or is composed of elements which are still in a state of discord. But what he probably meant was, that, harmony is composed of differing notes of higher or lower pitch which disagreed once, but are now reconciled by the art of music; for if the higher and lower notes still disagreed, there could be no harmony-clearly not. For harmony is a symphony, and symphony is an agreement; but an agreement of disagreements while they disagree there cannot be; you cannot harmonize that which disagrees. In like manner rhythm is compounded of elements short and long, once differing and now-in accord; which accordance, as in the former instance, medicine, so in all these other cases, music implants, making love and unison to grow up among them; and thus music, too, is concerned with the principles of love in their application to harmony and rhythm. Again, in the essential nature of harmony and rhythm there is no difficulty in discerning love which has not yet become double. But when you want to use them in actual life, either in the composition of songs or in the correct performance of airs or metres composed already, which latter is called education, then the difficulty begins, and the good artist is needed. Then the old tale has to be repeated of fair and heavenly love -the love of Urania the fair and heavenly muse, and of the duty of accepting the temperate, and those who are as yet intemperate only that they may become temperate, and of preserving their love; and again, of the vulgar Polyhymnia, who must be used with circumspection that the pleasure be enjoyed, but may not generate licentiousness; just as in my own art it is a great matter so to regulate the desires of the epicure that he may gratify his tastes without the attendant evil of disease. Whence I infer that in music, in medicine, in all other things human as which as divine, both loves ought to be noted as far as may be, for they are both present.

The course of the seasons is also full of both these principles; and when, as I was saying, the elements of hot and cold, moist and dry, attain the harmonious love of one another and blend in temperance and harmony, they bring to men, animals, and plants health and plenty, and do them no harm; whereas the wanton love, getting the upper hand and affecting the seasons of the year, is very destructive and injurious, being the source of pestilence, and bringing many other kinds of diseases on animals and plants; for hoar-frost and hail and blight spring from the excesses and disorders of these elements of love, which to know in relation to the revolutions of the heavenly bodies and the seasons of the year is termed astronomy. Furthermore all sacrifices and the whole province of divination, which is the art of communion between gods and men-these, I say, are concerned with the preservation of the good and the cure of the evil love. For all manner of impiety is likely to ensue if, instead of accepting and honouring and reverencing the harmonious love in all his actions, a man honours the other love, whether in his feelings towards gods or parents, towards the living or the dead. Wherefore the business of divination is to see to these loves and to heal them, and divination is the peacemaker of gods and men, working by a knowledge of the religious or irreligious tendencies which exist in human loves. Such is the great and mighty, or rather omnipotent force of love in general. And the love, more especially, which is concerned with the good, and which is perfected in company with temperance and

justice, whether among gods or men, has the greatest power, and is the source of all our happiness and harmony, and makes us friends with the gods who are above us, and with one another. I dare say that I too have omitted several things which might be said in praise of Love, but this was not intentional, and you, Aristophanes, may now supply the omission or take some other line of commendation; for I perceive that you are rid of the hiccough.

Yes, said Aristophanes, who followed, the hiccough is gone; not, however, until I applied the sneezing; and I wonder whether the harmony of the body has a love of such noises and ticklings, for I no sooner applied the sneezing than I was cured.

Eryximachus said: Beware, friend Aristophanes, although you are going to speak, you are making fun of me; and I shall have to watch and see whether I cannot have a laugh at your expense, when you might speak in peace.

You are right, said Aristophanes, laughing. I will unsay my words; but do you please not to watch me, as I fear that in the speech which I am about to make, instead of others laughing with me, which is to the manner born of our muse and would be all the better, I shall only be laughed at by them.

Do you expect to shoot your bolt and escape, Aristophanes? Well, perhaps if you are very careful and bear in mind that you will be called to account, I may be induced to let you off.

Aristophanes professed to open another vein of discourse; he had a mind to praise Love in another way, unlike that either of Pausanias or Eryximachus. Mankind; he said, judging by their neglect of him, have never, as I think, at all understood the power of Love. For if they had understood him they would surely have built noble temples and altars, and offered solemn sacrifices in his honour; but this is not done, and most certainly ought to be done: since of all the gods he is the best friend of men, the helper and the healer of the ills which are the great impediment to the happiness of the race. I will try to describe his power to you, and you shall teach the rest of the world what I am teaching you. In the first place, let me treat of the nature of man and what has happened to it; for the original human nature was not like the present, but different. The sexes were not two as they are now, but originally three in number; there was man, woman, and the union of the two, having a name corresponding to this double nature, which had once a real existence, but is now lost, and the word "Androgynous" is only preserved as a term of reproach. In the second place, the primeval man was round, his back and sides forming a circle; and he had four hands and four feet, one head with two faces, looking opposite ways, set on a round neck and precisely alike; also four ears, two privy members, and the remainder to correspond. He could walk upright as men now do, backwards or forwards as he pleased, and he could also roll over and over at a great pace, turning on his four hands and four feet, eight in all, like tumblers going over and over with their legs in the air; this was when he wanted to run fast. Now the sexes were three, and such as I have described them; because the sun, moon, and earth are three;-and the man was originally the child of the sun, the woman of the earth, and the man-woman of the moon, which is made up of sun and earth, and they were all round

and moved round and round: like their parents. Terrible was their might and strength, and the thoughts of their hearts were great, and they made an attack upon the gods; of them is told the tale of Otys and Ephialtes who, as Homer says, dared to scale heaven, and would have laid hands upon the gods. Doubt reigned in the celestial councils. Should they kill them and annihilate the race with thunderbolts, as they had done the giants, then there would be an end of the sacrifices and worship which men offered to them; but, on the other hand, the gods could not suffer their insolence to be unrestrained.

At last, after a good deal of reflection, Zeus discovered a way. He said: "Methinks I have a plan which will humble their pride and improve their manners; men shall continue to exist, but I will cut them in two and then they will be diminished in strength and increased in numbers; this will have the advantage of making them more profitable to us. They shall walk upright on two legs, and if they continue insolent and will not be quiet, I will split them again and they shall hop about on a single leg." He spoke and cut men in two, like a sorb-apple which is halved for pickling, or as you might divide an egg with a hair; and as he cut them one after another, he bade Apollo give the face and the half of the neck a turn in order that the man might contemplate the section of himself: he would thus learn a lesson of humility. Apollo was also bidden to heal their wounds and compose their forms. So he gave a turn to the face and pulled the skin from the sides all over that which in our language is called the belly, like the purses which draw in, and he made one mouth at the centre, which he fastened in a knot (the same which is called the navel); he also moulded the breast and took out most of the wrinkles, much as a shoemaker might smooth leather upon a last; he left a few, however, in the region of the belly and navel, as a memorial of the primeval state. After the division the two parts of man, each desiring his other half, came together, and throwing their arms about one another, entwined in mutual embraces, longing to grow into one, they were on the point of dying from hunger and self-neglect, because they did not like to do anything apart; and when one of the halves died and the other survived, the survivor sought another mate, man or woman as we call them, being the sections of entire men or women, and clung to that. They were being destroyed, when Zeus in pity of them invented a new plan: he turned the parts of generation round to the front, for this had not been always their position and they sowed the seed no longer as hitherto like grasshoppers in the ground, but in one another; and after the transposition the male generated in the female in order that by the mutual embraces of man and woman they might breed, and the race might continue; or if man came to man they might be satisfied, and rest, and go their ways to the business of life: so ancient is the desire of one another which is implanted in us, reuniting our original nature, making one of two, and healing the state of man.

Each of us when separated, having one side only, like a flat fish, is but the indenture of a man, and he is always looking for his other half. Men who are a section of that double nature which was once called Androgynous are lovers of women; adulterers are generally of this breed, and also adulterous women who lust after men: the women who are a section of the woman do not care for men, but have female attachments; the female companions are of this sort. But they who are a section of the male follow the male, and while they are young, being slices of the original man, they hang about men and embrace them, and they are themselves the best of boys and youths, because they

have the most manly nature. Some indeed assert that they are shameless, but this is not true; for they do not act thus from any want of shame, but because they are valiant and manly, and have a manly countenance, and they embrace that which is like them. And these when they grow up become our statesmen, and these only, which is a great proof of the truth of what I am saying. When they reach manhood they are loves of youth, and are not naturally inclined to marry or beget children, -if at all, they do so only in obedience to the law; but they are satisfied if they may be allowed to live with one another unwedded; and such a nature is prone to love and ready to return love, always embracing that which is akin to him. And when one of them meets with his other half, the actual half of himself, whether he be a lover of youth or a lover of another sort, the pair are lost in an amazement of love and friendship and intimacy, and would not be out of the other's sight, as I may say, even for a moment: these are the people who pass their whole lives together; yet they could not explain what they desire of one another. For the intense yearning which each of them has towards the other does not appear to be the desire of lover's intercourse, but of something else which the soul of either evidently desires and cannot tell, and of which she has only a dark and doubtful presentiment. Suppose Hephaestus, with his instruments, to come to the pair who are lying side by side and to say to them, "What do you people want of one another?" they would be unable to explain. And suppose further, that when he saw their perplexity he said: "Do you desire to be wholly one; always day and night to be in one another's company? for if this is what you desire, I am ready to melt you into one and let you grow together, so that being two you shall become one, and while you live a common life as if you were a single man, and after your death in the world below still be one departed soul instead of two-I ask whether this is what you lovingly desire, and whether you are satisfied to attain this?"-there is not a man of them who when he heard the proposal would deny or would not acknowledge that this meeting and melting into one another, this becoming one instead of two, was the very expression of his ancient need. And the reason is that human nature was originally one and we were a whole, and the desire and pursuit of the whole is called love. There was a time, I say, when we were one, but now because of the wickedness of mankind God has dispersed us, as the Arcadians were dispersed into villages by the Lacedaemonians. And if we are not obedient to the gods, there is a danger that we shall be split up again and go about in basso-relievo, like the profile figures having only half a nose which are sculptured on monuments, and that we shall be like tallies.

Wherefore let us exhort all men to piety, that we may avoid evil, and obtain the good, of which Love is to us the lord and minister; and let no one oppose him-he is the enemy of the gods who oppose him. For if we are friends of the God and at peace with him we shall find our own true loves, which rarely happens in this world at present. I am serious, and therefore I must beg Eryximachus not to make fun or to find any allusion in what I am saying to Pausanias and Agathon, who, as I suspect, are both of the manly nature, and belong to the class which I have been describing. But my words have a wider application-they include men and women everywhere; and I believe that if our loves were perfectly accomplished, and each one returning to his primeval nature had his original true love, then our race would be happy. And if this would be best of all, the best in the next degree and under present circumstances must be the nearest approach to such an union; and that will be the attainment of a congenial love. Wherefore, if we

would praise him who has given to us the benefit, we must praise the god Love, who is our greatest benefactor, both leading us in this life back to our own nature, and giving us high hopes for the future, for he promises that if we are pious, he will restore us to our original state, and heal us and make us happy and blessed. This, Eryximachus, is my discourse of love, which, although different to yours, I must beg you to leave unassailed by the shafts of your ridicule, in order that each may have his turn; each, or rather either, for Agathon and Socrates are the only ones left.

Indeed, I am not going to attack you, said Eryximachus, for I thought your speech charming, and did I not know that Agathon and Socrates are masters in the art of love, I should be really afraid that they would have nothing to say, after the world of things which have been said already. But, for all that, I am not without hopes.

Socrates said: You played your part well, Eryximachus; but if you were as I am now, or rather as I shall be when Agathon has spoken, you would, indeed, be in a great strait.

You want to cast a spell over me, Socrates, said Agathon, in the hope that I may be disconcerted at the expectation raised among the audience that I shall speak well.

I should be strangely forgetful, Agathon replied Socrates, of the courage and magnanimity which you showed when your own compositions were about to be exhibited, and you came upon the stage with the actors and faced the vast theatre altogether undismayed, if I thought that your nerves could be fluttered at a small party of friends.

Do you think, Socrates, said Agathon, that my head is so full of the theatre as not to know how much more formidable to a man of sense a few good judges are than many fools?

Nay, replied Socrates, I should be very wrong in attributing to you, Agathon, that or any other want of refinement. And I am quite aware that if you happened to meet with any whom you thought wise, you would care for their opinion much more than for that of the many. But then we, having been a part of the foolish many in the theatre, cannot be regarded as the select wise; though I know that if you chanced to be in the presence, not of one of ourselves, but of some really wise man, you would be ashamed of disgracing yourself before him-would you not?

Yes, said Agathon.

But before the many you would not be ashamed, if you thought that you were doing something disgraceful in their presence?

Here Phaedrus interrupted them, saying: not answer him, my dear Agathon; for if he can only get a partner with whom he can talk, especially a good-looking one, he will no longer care about the completion of our plan. Now I love to hear him talk; but just at present I must not forget the encomium on Love which I ought to receive from him and from every one. When you and he have paid your tribute to the god, then you may talk.

Very good, Phaedrus, said Agathon; I see no reason why I should not proceed with my speech, as I shall have many other opportunities of conversing with Socrates. Let me say first how I ought to speak, and then speak:-

The previous speakers, instead of praising the god Love, or unfolding his nature, appear to have congratulated mankind on the benefits which he confers upon them. But I would rather praise the god first, and then speak of his gifts; this is always the right way of praising everything. May I say without impiety or offence, that of all the blessed gods he is the most blessed because he is the fairest and best? And he is the fairest: for, in the first place, he is the youngest, and of his youth he is himself the witness, fleeing out of the way of age, who is swift enough, swifter truly than most of us like:-Love hates him and will not come near him; but youth and love live and move together-like to like, as the proverb says. Many things were said by Phaedrus about Love in which I agree with him; but I cannot agree that he is older than Iapetus and Kronos:-not so; I maintain him to be the youngest of the gods, and youthful ever. The ancient doings among the gods of which Hesiod and Parmenides spoke, if the tradition of them be true, were done of Necessity and not Love; had Love been in those days, there would have been no chaining or mutilation of the gods, or other violence, but peace and sweetness, as there is now in heaven, since the rule of Love began.

Love is young and also tender; he ought to have a poet like Homer to describe his tenderness, as Homer says of Ate, that she is a goddess and tender:

Her feet are tender, for she sets her steps,

Not on the ground but on the heads of men: herein is an excellent proof of her tenderness that,-she walks not upon the hard but upon the soft. Let us adduce a similar proof of the tenderness of Love; for he walks not upon the earth, nor yet upon skulls of men, which are not so very soft, but in the hearts and souls of both god, and men, which are of all things the softest: in them he walks and dwells and makes his home. Not in every soul without exception, for Where there is hardness he departs, where there is softness there he dwells; and nestling always with his feet and in all manner of ways in the softest of soft places, how can he be other than the softest of all things? Of a truth he is the tenderest as well as the youngest, and also he is of flexile form; for if he were hard and without flexure he could not enfold all things, or wind his way into and out of every soul of man undiscovered. And a proof of his flexibility and symmetry of form is his grace, which is universally admitted to be in an especial manner the attribute of Love; ungrace and love are always at war with one another. The fairness of his complexion is revealed by his habitation among the flowers; for he dwells not amid bloomless or fading beauties, whether of body or soul or aught else, but in the place of flowers and scents, there he sits and abides. Concerning the beauty of the god I have said enough; and yet there remains much more which I might say. Of his virtue I have now to speak: his greatest glory is that he can neither do nor suffer wrong to or from any god or any man; for he suffers not by force if he suffers; force comes not near him, neither when he acts does he act by force. For all men in all things serve him of their own free will, and where there is voluntary agreement, there, as the laws which are the

lords of the city say, is justice. And not only is he just but exceedingly temperate, for Temperance is the acknowledged ruler of the pleasures and desires, and no pleasure ever masters Love; he is their master and they are his servants; and if he conquers them he must be temperate indeed. As to courage, even the God of War is no match for him; he is the captive and Love is the lord, for love, the love of Aphrodite, masters him, as the tale runs; and the master is stronger than the servant. And if he conquers the bravest of all others, he must be himself the bravest.

Of his courage and justice and temperance I have spoken, but I have yet to speak of his wisdom-and according to the measure of my ability I must try to do my best. In the first place he is a poet (and here, like Eryximachus, I magnify my art), and he is also the source of poesy in others, which he could not be if he were not himself a poet. And at the touch of him every one becomes a poet, even though he had no music in him before; this also is a proof that Love is a good poet and accomplished in all the fine arts; for no one can give to another that which he has not himself, or teach that of which he has no knowledge. Who will deny that the creation of the animals is his doing? Are they not all the works his wisdom, born and begotten of him? And as to the artists, do we not know that he only of them whom love inspires has the light of fame?-he whom Love touches riot walks in darkness. The arts of medicine and archery and divination were discovered by Apollo, under the guidance of love and desire; so that he too is a disciple of Love. Also the melody of the Muses, the metallurgy of Hephaestus, the weaving of Athene, the empire of Zeus over gods and men, are all due to Love, who was the inventor of them. And so Love set in order the empire of the gods-the love of beauty, as is evident, for with deformity Love has no concern. In the days of old, as I began by saying, dreadful deeds were done among the gods, for they were ruled by Necessity; but now since the birth of Love, and from the Love of the beautiful, has sprung every good in heaven and earth. Therefore, Phaedrus, I say of Love that he is the fairest and best in himself, and the cause of what is fairest and best in all other things. And there comes into my mind a line of poetry in which he is said to be the god who

Gives peace on earth and calms the stormy deep,

Who stills the winds and bids the sufferer sleep. This is he who empties men of disaffection and fills them with affection, who makes them to meet together at banquets such as these: in sacrifices, feasts, dances, he is our lord-who sends courtesy and sends away discourtesy, who gives kindness ever and never gives unkindness; the friend of the good, the wonder of the wise, the amazement of the gods; desired by those who have no part in him, and precious to those who have the better part in him; parent of delicacy, luxury, desire, fondness, softness, grace; regardful of the good, regardless of the evil: in every word, work, wish, fear-saviour, pilot, comrade, helper; glory of gods and men, leader best and brightest: in whose footsteps let every man follow, sweetly singing in his honour and joining in that sweet strain with which love charms the souls of gods and men. Such is the speech, Phaedrus, half-playful, yet having a certain measure of seriousness, which, according to my ability, I dedicate to the god.

When Agathon had done speaking, Aristodemus said that there was a general cheer; the young man was thought to have spoken in a manner worthy of himself, and of the

god. And Socrates, looking at Eryximachus, said: Tell me, son of Acumenus, was there not reason in my fears? and was I not a true prophet when I said that Agathon would make a wonderful oration, and that I should be in a strait?

The part of the prophecy which concerns Agathon, replied Eryximachus, appears to me to be true; but, not the other part-that you will be in a strait.

Why, my dear friend, said Socrates, must not I or any one be in a strait who has to speak after he has heard such a rich and varied discourse? I am especially struck with the beauty of the concluding words-who could listen to them without amazement? When I reflected on the immeasurable inferiority of my own powers, I was ready to run away for shame, if there had been a possibility of escape. For I was reminded of Gorgias, and at the end of his speech I fancied that Agathon was shaking at me the Gorginian or Gorgonian head of the great master of rhetoric, which was simply to turn me and my speech, into stone, as Homer says, and strike me dumb. And then I perceived how foolish I had been in consenting to take my turn with you in praising love, and saying that I too was a master of the art, when I really had no conception how anything ought to be praised. For in my simplicity I imagined that the topics of praise should be true, and that this being presupposed, out of the true the speaker was to choose the best and set them forth in the best manner. And I felt quite proud, thinking that I knew the nature of true praise, and should speak well. Whereas I now see that the intention was to attribute to Love every species of greatness and glory, whether really belonging to him not, without regard to truth or falsehood-that was no matter; for the original, proposal seems to have been not that each of you should really praise Love, but only that you should appear to praise him. And so you attribute to Love every imaginable form of praise which can be gathered anywhere; and you say that "he is all this," and "the cause of all that," making him appear the fairest and best of all to those who know him not, for you cannot impose upon those who know him. And a noble and solemn hymn of praise have you rehearsed. But as I misunderstood the nature of the praise when I said that I would take my turn, I must beg to be absolved from the promise which I made in ignorance, and which (as Euripides would say) was a promise of the lips and not of the mind. Farewell then to such a strain: for I do not praise in that way; no, indeed, I cannot. But if you like to here the truth about love, I am ready to speak in my own manner, though I will not make myself ridiculous by entering into any rivalry with you. Say then, Phaedrus, whether you would like, to have the truth about love, spoken in any words and in any order which may happen to come into my mind at the time. Will that be agreeable to you?

Aristodemus said that Phaedrus and the company bid him speak in any manner which he thought best. Then, he added, let me have your permission first to ask Agathon a few more questions, in order that I may take his admissions as the premisses of my discourse.

I grant the permission, said Phaedrus: put your questions. Socrates then proceeded as follows:-

In the magnificent oration which you have just uttered, I think that you were right, my

dear Agathon, in proposing to speak of the nature of Love first and afterwards of his works-that is a way of beginning which I very much approve. And as you have spoken so eloquently of his nature, may I ask you further, Whether love is the love of something or of nothing? And here I must explain myself: I do not want you to say that love is the love of a father or the love of a mother-that would be ridiculous; but to answer as you would, if I asked is a father a father of something? to which you would find no difficulty in replying, of a son or daughter: and the answer would be right.

Very true, said Agathon.

And you would say the same of a mother?

He assented.

Yet let me ask you one more question in order to illustrate my meaning: Is not a brother to be regarded essentially as a brother of something?

Certainly, he replied.

That is, of a brother or sister?

Yes, he said.

And now, said Socrates, I will ask about Love:-Is Love of something or of nothing?

Of something, surely, he replied.

Keep in mind what this is, and tell me what I want to know-whether Love desires that of which love is.

Yes, surely.

And does he possess, or does he not possess, that which he loves and desires?

Probably not, I should say.

Nay, replied Socrates, I would have you consider whether "necessarily" is not rather the word. The inference that he who desires something is in want of something, and that he who desires nothing is in want of nothing, is in my judgment, Agathon absolutely and necessarily true. What do you think?

I agree with you, said Agathon.

Very good. Would he who is great, desire to be great, or he who is strong, desire to be strong?

That would be inconsistent with our previous admissions.

True. For he who is anything cannot want to be that which he is?

Very true.

And yet, added Socrates, if a man being strong desired to be strong, or being swift desired to be swift, or being healthy desired to be healthy, in that case he might be thought to desire something which he already has or is. I give the example in order that we may avoid misconception. For the possessors of these qualities, Agathon, must be supposed to have their respective advantages at the time, whether they choose or not; and who can desire that which he has? Therefore when a person says, I am well and wish to be well, or I am rich and wish to be rich, and I desire simply to have what I have-to him we shall reply: "You, my friend, having wealth and health and strength, want to have the continuance of them; for at this moment, whether you choose or no, you have them. And when you say, I desire that which I have and nothing else, is not your meaning that you want to have what you now have in the future?" He must agree with us-must he not?

He must, replied Agathon.

Then, said Socrates, he desires that what he has at present may be preserved to him in the future, which is equivalent to saying that he desires something which is non-existent to him, and which as yet he has not got.

Very true, he said.

Then he and every one who desires, desires that which he has not already, and which is future and not present, and which he has not, and is not, and of which he is in want;-these are the sort of things which love and desire seek?

Very true, he said.

Then now, said Socrates, let us recapitulate the argument. First, is not love of something, and of something too which is wanting to a man?

Yes, he replied.

Remember further what you said in your speech, or if you do not remember I will remind you: you said that the love of the beautiful set in order the empire of the gods, for that of deformed things there is no love-did you not say something of that kind?

Yes, said Agathon.

Yes, my friend, and the remark was a just one. And if this is true, Love is the love of beauty and not of deformity?

He assented.

And the admission has been already made that Love is of something which a man wants and has not?

True, he said.

Then Love wants and has not beauty?

Certainly, he replied.

And would you call that beautiful which wants and does not possess beauty?

Certainly not.

Then would you still say that love is beautiful?

Agathon replied: I fear that I did not understand what I was saying.

You made a very good speech, Agathon, replied Socrates; but there is yet one small question which I would fain ask:-Is not the good also the beautiful?

Yes.

Then in wanting the beautiful, love wants also the good?

I cannot refute you, Socrates, said Agathon:-Let us assume that what you say is true.

Say rather, beloved Agathon, that you cannot refute the truth; for Socrates is easily refuted.

And now, taking my leave of you, I would rehearse a tale of love which I heard from Diotima of Mantinea, a woman wise in this and in many other kinds of knowledge, who in the days of old, when the Athenians offered sacrifice before the coming of the plague, delayed the disease ten years. She was my instructress in the art of love, and I shall repeat to you what she said to me, beginning with the admissions made by Agathon, which are nearly if not quite the same which I made to the wise woman when she questioned me-I think that this will be the easiest way, and I shall take both parts myself as well as I can. As you, Agathon, suggested, I must speak first of the being and nature of Love, and then of his works. First I said to her in nearly the same words which he used to me, that Love was a mighty god, and likewise fair and she proved to me as I proved to him that, by my own showing, Love was neither fair nor good. "What do you mean, Diotima," I said, "is love then evil and foul?" "Hush," she cried; "must that be foul which is not fair?" "Certainly," I said. "And is that which is not wise, ignorant? do you not see that there is a mean between wisdom and ignorance?" "And what may that be?" I said. "Right opinion," she replied; "which, as you know, being incapable of giving a reason, is not knowledge (for how can knowledge be devoid of reason? nor again, ignorance, for neither can ignorance attain the truth), but is clearly something which is a

mean between ignorance and wisdom." "Quite true," I replied. "Do not then insist," she said, "that what is not fair is of necessity foul, or what is not good evil; or infer that because love is not fair and good he is therefore foul and evil; for he is in a mean between them." "Well," I said, "Love is surely admitted by all to be a great god." "By those who know or by those who do not know?" "By all." "And how, Socrates," she said with a smile, "can Love be acknowledged to be a great god by those who say that he is not a god at all?" "And who are they?" I said. "You and I are two of them," she replied. "How can that be?" I said. "It is quite intelligible," she replied; "for you yourself would acknowledge that the gods are happy and fair of course you would-would to say that any god was not?" "Certainly not," I replied. "And you mean by the happy, those who are the possessors of things good or fair?" "Yes." "And you admitted that Love, because he was in want, desires those good and fair things of which he is in want?" "Yes, I did." "But how can he be a god who has no portion in what is either good or fair?" "Impossible." "Then you see that you also deny the divinity of Love."

"What then is Love?" I asked; "Is he mortal?" "No." "What then?" "As in the former instance, he is neither mortal nor immortal, but in a mean between the two." "What is he, Diotima?" "He is a great spirit (daimon), and like all spirits he is intermediate between the divine and the mortal." "And what," I said, "is his power?" "He interprets," she replied, "between gods and men, conveying and taking across to the gods the prayers and sacrifices of men, and to men the commands and replies of the gods; he is the mediator who spans the chasm which divides them, and therefore in him all is bound together, and through him the arts of the prophet and the priest, their sacrifices and mysteries and charms, and all, prophecy and incantation, find their way. For God mingles not with man; but through Love. all the intercourse, and converse of god with man, whether awake or asleep, is carried on. The wisdom which understands this is spiritual; all other wisdom, such as that of arts and handicrafts, is mean and vulgar. Now these spirits or intermediate powers are many and diverse, and one of them is Love. "And who," I said, "was his father, and who his mother?" "The tale," she said, "will take time; nevertheless I will tell you. On the birthday of Aphrodite there was a feast of the gods, at which the god Poros or Plenty, who is the son of Metis or Discretion, was one of the guests. When the feast was over, Penia or Poverty, as the manner is on such occasions, came about the doors to beg. Now Plenty who was the worse for nectar (there was no wine in those days), went into the garden of Zeus and fell into a heavy sleep, and Poverty considering her own straitened circumstances, plotted to have a child by him, and accordingly she lay down at his side and conceived love, who partly because he is naturally a lover of the beautiful, and because Aphrodite is herself beautiful, and also because he was born on her birthday, is her follower and attendant. And as his parentage is, so also are his fortunes. In the first place he is always poor, and anything but tender and fair, as the many imagine him; and he is rough and squalid, and has no shoes, nor a house to dwell in; on the bare earth exposed he lies under the open heaven, in the streets, or at the doors of houses, taking his rest; and like his mother he is always in distress. Like his father too, whom he also partly resembles, he is always plotting against the fair and good; he is bold, enterprising, strong, a mighty hunter, always weaving some intrigue or other, keen in the pursuit of wisdom, fertile in resources; a philosopher at all times, terrible as an enchanter, sorcerer, sophist. He is by nature neither mortal nor immortal, but alive and flourishing at one moment when he

is in plenty, and dead at another moment, and again alive by reason of his father's nature. But that which is always flowing in is always flowing out, and so he is never in want and never in wealth; and, further, he is in a mean between ignorance and knowledge. The truth of the matter is this: No god is a philosopher. or seeker after wisdom, for he is wise already; nor does any man who is wise seek after wisdom. Neither do the ignorant seek after Wisdom. For herein is the evil of ignorance, that he who is neither good nor wise is nevertheless satisfied with himself: he has no desire for that of which he feels no want." "But-who then, Diotima," I said, "are the lovers of wisdom, if they are neither the wise nor the foolish?" "A child may answer that question," she replied; "they are those who are in a mean between the two; Love is one of them. For wisdom is a most beautiful thing, and Love is of the beautiful; and therefore Love is also a philosopher: or lover of wisdom, and being a lover of wisdom is in a mean between the wise and the ignorant. And of this too his birth is the cause; for his father is wealthy and wise, and his mother poor and foolish. Such, my dear Socrates, is the nature of the spirit Love. The error in your conception of him was very natural, and as I imagine from what you say, has arisen out of a confusion of love and the beloved, which made you think that love was all beautiful. For the beloved is the truly beautiful, and delicate, and perfect, and blessed; but the principle of love is of another nature, and is such as I have described."

I said, "O thou stranger woman, thou sayest well; but, assuming Love to be such as you say, what is the use of him to men?" "That, Socrates," she replied, "I will attempt to unfold: of his nature and birth I have already spoken; and you acknowledge that love is of the beautiful. But some one will say: Of the beautiful in what, Socrates and Diotima?-or rather let me put the question more dearly, and ask: When a man loves the beautiful, what does he desire?" I answered her "That the beautiful may be his." "Still," she said, "the answer suggests a further question: What is given by the possession of beauty?" "To what you have asked," I replied, "I have no answer ready." "Then," she said, "Let me put the word 'good' in the place of the beautiful, and repeat the question once more: If he who loves good, what is it then that he loves? "The possession of the good," I said. "And what does he gain who possesses the good?" "Happiness," I replied; "there is less difficulty in answering that question." "Yes," she said, "the happy are made happy by the acquisition of good things. Nor is there any need to ask why a man desires happiness; the answer is already final." "You are right." I said. "And is this wish and this desire common to all? and do all men always desire their own good, or only some men?-what say you?" "All men," I replied; "the desire is common to all." "Why, then," she rejoined, "are not all men, Socrates, said to love, but only some them? whereas you say that all men are always loving the same things." "I myself wonder," I said,-why this is." "There is nothing to wonder at," she replied; "the reason is that one part of love is separated off and receives the name of the whole, but the other parts have other names." "Give an illustration," I said. She answered me as follows: "There is poetry, which, as you know, is complex; and manifold. All creation or passage of non-being into being is poetry or making, and the processes of all art are creative; and the masters of arts are all poets or makers." "Very true." "Still," she said, "you know that they are not called poets, but have other names; only that portion of the art which is separated off from the rest, and is concerned with music and metre, is termed poetry, and they who possess poetry in this sense of the word are called poets." "Very true," I said. "And the

same holds of love. For you may say generally that all desire of good and happiness is only the great and subtle power of love; but they who are drawn towards him by any other path, whether the path of money-making or gymnastics or philosophy, are not called lovers -the name of the whole is appropriated to those whose affection takes one form only-they alone are said to love, or to be lovers." "I dare say," I replied, "that you are right." "Yes," she added, "and you hear people say that lovers are seeking for their other half; but I say that they are seeking neither for the half of themselves, nor for the whole, unless the half or the whole be also a good. And they will cut off their own hands and feet and cast them away, if they are evil; for they love not what is their own, unless perchance there be some one who calls what belongs to him the good, and what belongs to another the evil. For there is nothing which men love but the good. Is there anything?" "Certainly, I should say, that there is nothing." "Then," she said, "the simple truth is, that men love the good." "Yes," I said. "To which must be added that they love the possession of the good?" "Yes, that must be added." "And not only the possession, but the everlasting possession of the good?" "That must be added too." "Then love," she said, "may be described generally as the love of the everlasting possession of the good?" "That is most true."

"Then if this be the nature of love, can you tell me further," she said, "what is the manner of the pursuit? what are they doing who show all this eagerness and heat which is called love? and what is the object which they have in view? Answer me." "Nay, Diotima," I replied, "if I had known, I should not have wondered at your wisdom, neither should I have come to learn from you about this very matter." "Well," she said, "I will teach you:-The object which they have in view is birth in beauty, whether of body or, soul." "I do not understand you," I said; "the oracle requires an explanation." "I will make my meaning dearer," she replied. "I mean to say, that all men are bringing to the birth in their bodies and in their souls. There is a certain age at which human nature is desirous of procreation-procreation which must be in beauty and not in deformity; and this procreation is the union of man and woman, and is a divine thing; for conception and generation are an immortal principle in the mortal creature, and in the inharmonious they can never be. But the deformed is always inharmonious with the divine, and the beautiful harmonious. Beauty, then, is the destiny or goddess of parturition who presides at birth, and therefore, when approaching beauty, the conceiving power is propitious, and diffusive, and benign, and begets and bears fruit: at the sight of ugliness she frowns and contracts and has a sense of pain, and turns away, and shrivels up, and not without a pang refrains from conception. And this is the reason why, when the hour of conception arrives, and the teeming nature is full, there is such a flutter and ecstasy about beauty whose approach is the alleviation of the pain of travail. For love, Socrates, is not, as you imagine, the love of the beautiful only." "What then?" "The love of generation and of birth in beauty." "Yes," I said. "Yes, indeed," she replied. "But why of generation?" "Because to the mortal creature, generation is a sort of eternity and immortality," she replied; "and if, as has been already admitted, love is of the everlasting possession of the good, all men will necessarily desire immortality together with good: Wherefore love is of immortality."

All this she taught me at various times when she spoke of love. And I remember her once saying to me, "What is the cause, Socrates, of love, and the attendant desire? See

you not how all animals, birds, as well as beasts, in their desire of procreation, are in agony when they take the infection of love, which begins with the desire of union; whereto is added the care of offspring, on whose behalf the weakest are ready to battle against the strongest even to the uttermost, and to die for them, and will, let themselves be tormented with hunger or suffer anything in order to maintain their young. Man may be supposed to act thus from reason; but why should animals have these passionate feelings? Can you tell me why?" Again I replied that I did not know. She said to me: "And do you expect ever to become a master in the art of love, if you do not know this?" "But I have told you already, Diotima, that my ignorance is the reason why I come to you; for I am conscious that I want a teacher; tell me then the cause of this and of the other mysteries of love." "Marvel not," she said, "if you believe that love is of the immortal, as we have several times acknowledged; for here again, and on the same principle too, the mortal nature is seeking as far as is possible to be everlasting and immortal: and this is only to be attained by generation, because generation always leaves behind a new existence in the place of the old. Nay even in the life, of the same individual there is succession and not absolute unity: a man is called the same, and yet in the short interval which elapses between youth and age, and in which every animal is said to have life and identity, he is undergoing a perpetual process of loss and reparation-hair, flesh, bones, blood, and the whole body are always changing. Which is true not only of the body, but also of the soul, whose habits, tempers, opinions, desires, pleasures, pains, fears, never remain the same in any one of us, but are always coming and going; and equally true of knowledge, and what is still more surprising to us mortals, not only do the sciences in general spring up and decay, so that in respect of them we are never the same; but each of them individually experiences a like change. For what is implied in the word 'recollection,' but the departure of knowledge, which is ever being forgotten, and is renewed and preserved by recollection, and appears to be the same although in reality new, according to that law of succession by which all mortal things are preserved, not absolutely the same, but by substitution, the old worn-out mortality leaving another new and similar existence behind unlike the divine, which is always the same and not another? And in this way, Socrates, the mortal body, or mortal anything, partakes of immortality; but the immortal in another way. Marvel not then at the love which all men have of their offspring; for that universal love and interest is for the sake of immortality."

I was astonished at her words, and said: "Is this really true, O thou wise Diotima?" And she answered with all the authority of an accomplished sophist: "Of that, Socrates, you may be assured;-think only of the ambition of men, and you will wonder at the senselessness of their ways, unless you consider how they are stirred by the love of an immortality of fame. They are ready to run all risks greater far than they would have for their children, and to spend money and undergo any sort of toil, and even to die, for the sake of leaving behind them a name which shall be eternal. Do you imagine that Alcestis would have died to save Admetus, or Achilles to avenge Patroclus, or your own Codrus in order to preserve the kingdom for his sons, if they had not imagined that the memory of their virtues, which still survives among us, would be immortal? Nay," she said, "I am persuaded that all men do all things, and the better they are the more they do them, in hope of the glorious fame of immortal virtue; for they desire the immortal."

“Those who are pregnant in the body only, betake themselves to women and beget children-this is the character of their love; their offspring, as they hope, will preserve their memory and giving them the blessedness and immortality which they desire in the future. But souls which are pregnant-for there certainly are men who are more creative in their souls than in their bodies conceive that which is proper for the soul to conceive or contain. And what are these conceptions?-wisdom and virtue in general. And such creators are poets and all artists who are deserving of the name inventor. But the greatest and fairest sort of wisdom by far is that which is concerned with the ordering of states and families, and which is called temperance and justice. And he who in youth has the seed of these implanted in him and is himself inspired, when he comes to maturity desires to beget and generate. He wanders about seeking beauty that he may beget offspring-for in deformity he will beget nothing-and naturally embraces the beautiful rather than the deformed body; above all when he finds fair and noble and well-nurtured soul, he embraces the two in one person, and to such an one he is full of speech about virtue and the nature and pursuits of a good man; and he tries to educate him; and at the touch of the beautiful which is ever present to his memory, even when absent, he brings forth that which he had conceived long before, and in company with him tends that which he brings forth; and they are married by a far nearer tie and have a closer friendship than those who beget mortal children, for the children who are their common offspring are fairer and more immortal. Who, when he thinks of Homer and Hesiod and other great poets, would not rather have their children than ordinary human ones? Who would not emulate them in the creation of children such as theirs, which have preserved their memory and given them everlasting glory? Or who would not have such children as Lycurgus left behind him to be the saviours, not only of Lacedaemon, but of Hellas, as one may say? There is Solon, too, who is the revered father of Athenian laws; and many others there are in many other places, both among hellenes and barbarians, who have given to the world many noble works, and have been the parents of virtue of every kind; and many temples have been raised in their honour for the sake of children such as theirs; which were never raised in honour of any one, for the sake of his mortal children.

“These are the lesser mysteries of love, into which even you, Socrates, may enter; to the greater and more hidden ones which are the crown of these, and to which, if you pursue them in a right spirit, they will lead, I know not whether you will be able to attain. But I will do my utmost to inform you, and do you follow if you can. For he who would proceed aright in this matter should begin in youth to visit beautiful forms; and first, if he be guided by his instructor aright, to love one such form only-out of that he should create fair thoughts; and soon he will of himself perceive that the beauty of one form is akin to the beauty of another; and then if beauty of form in general is his pursuit, how foolish would he be not to recognize that the beauty in every form is and the same! And when he perceives this he will abate his violent love of the one, which he will despise and deem a small thing, and will become a lover of all beautiful forms; in the next stage he will consider that the beauty of the mind is more honourable than the beauty of the outward form. So that if a virtuous soul have but a little comeliness, he will be content to love and tend him, and will search out and bring to the birth thoughts which may improve the young, until he is compelled to contemplate and see the beauty of institutions and laws, and to understand that the beauty of them all is of one family, and

that personal beauty is a trifle; and after laws and institutions he will go on to the sciences, that he may see their beauty, being not like a servant in love with the beauty of one youth or man or institution, himself a slave mean and narrow-minded, but drawing towards and contemplating the vast sea of beauty, he will create many fair and noble thoughts and notions in boundless love of wisdom; until on that shore he grows and waxes strong, and at last the vision is revealed to him of a single science, which is the science of beauty everywhere. To this I will proceed; please to give me your very best attention:

“He who has been instructed thus far in the things of love, and who has learned to see the beautiful in due order and succession, when he comes toward the end will suddenly perceive a nature of wondrous beauty (and this, Socrates, is the final cause of all our former toils)-a nature which in the first place is everlasting, not growing and decaying, or waxing and waning; secondly, not fair in one point of view and foul in another, or at one time or in one relation or at one place fair, at another time or in another relation or at another place foul, as if fair to some and-foul to others, or in the likeness of a face or hands or any other part of the bodily frame, or in any form of speech or knowledge, or existing in any other being, as for example, in an animal, or in heaven or in earth, or in any other place; but beauty absolute, separate, simple, and everlasting, which without diminution and without increase, or any change, is imparted to the ever-growing and perishing beauties of all other things. He who from these ascending under the influence of true love, begins to perceive that beauty, is not far from the end. And the true order of going, or being led by another, to the things of love, is to begin from the beauties of earth and mount upwards for the sake of that other beauty, using these as steps only, and from one going on to two, and from two to all fair forms, and from fair forms to fair practices, and from fair practices to fair notions, until from fair notions he arrives at the notion of absolute beauty, and at last knows what the essence of beauty is. This, my dear Socrates,” said the stranger of Mantinea, “is that life above all others which man should live, in the contemplation of beauty absolute; a beauty which if you once beheld, you would see not to be after the measure of gold, and garments, and fair boys and youths, whose presence now entrances you; and you and many a one would be content to live seeing them only and conversing with them without meat or drink, if that were possible-you only want to look at them and to be with them. But what if man had eyes to see the true beauty-the divine beauty, I mean, pure and dear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality and all the colours and vanities of human life-thither looking, and holding converse with the true beauty simple and divine? Remember how in that communion only, beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but realities (for he has hold not of an image but of a reality), and bringing forth and nourishing true virtue to become the friend of God and be immortal, if mortal man may. Would that be an ignoble life?”

Such, Phaedrus-and I speak not only to you, but to all of you-were the words of Diotima; and I am persuaded of their truth. And being persuaded of them, I try to persuade others, that in the attainment of this end human nature will not easily find a helper better than love: And therefore, also, I say that every man ought to honour him as I myself honour him, and walk in his ways, and exhort others to do the same, and praise the power and spirit of love according to the measure of my ability now and ever.

The words which I have spoken, you, Phaedrus, may call an encomium of love, or anything else which you please.

When Socrates had done speaking, the company applauded, and Aristophanes was beginning to say something in answer to the allusion which Socrates had made to his own speech, when suddenly there was a great knocking at the door of the house, as of revellers, and the sound of a flute-girl was heard. Agathon told the attendants to go and see who were the intruders. "If they are friends of ours," he said, "invite them in, but if not, say that the drinking is over." A little while afterwards they heard the voice of Alcibiades resounding in the court; he was in a great state of intoxication and kept roaring and shouting "Where is Agathon? Lead me to Agathon," and at length, supported by the flute-girl and some of his attendants, he found his way to them. "Hail, friends," he said, appearing at the door crown, with a massive garland of ivy and violets, his head flowing with ribands. "Will you have a very drunken man as a companion of your revels? Or shall I crown Agathon, which was my intention in coming, and go away? For I was unable to come yesterday, and therefore I am here to-day, carrying on my head these ribands, that taking them from my own head, I may crown the head of this fairest and wisest of men, as I may be allowed to call him. Will you laugh at me because I am drunk? Yet I know very well that I am speaking the truth, although you may laugh. But first tell me; if I come in shall we have the understanding of which I spoke? Will you drink with me or not?"

The company were vociferous in begging that he would take his place among them, and Agathon specially invited him. Thereupon he was led in by the people who were with him; and as he was being led, intending to crown Agathon, he took the ribands from his own head and held them in front of his eyes; he was thus prevented from seeing Socrates, who made way for him, and Alcibiades took the vacant place between Agathon and Socrates, and in taking the place he embraced Agathon and crowned him. Take off his sandals, said Agathon, and let him make a third on the same couch.

By all means; but who makes the third partner in our revels? said Alcibiades, turning round and starting up as he caught sight of Socrates. By Heracles, he said, what is this? here is Socrates always lying in wait for me, and always, as his way is, coming out at all sorts of unsuspected places: and now, what have you to say for yourself, and why are you lying here, where I perceive that you have contrived to find a place, not by a joker or lover of jokes, like Aristophanes, but by the fairest of the company?

Socrates turned to Agathon and said: I must ask you to protect me, Agathon; for the passion of this man has grown quite a serious matter to me. Since I became his admirer I have never been allowed to speak to any other fair one, or so much as to look at them. If I do, he goes wild with envy and jealousy, and not only abuses me but can hardly keep his hands off me, and at this moment he may do me some harm. Please to see to this, and either reconcile me to him, or, if he attempts violence, protect me, as I am in bodily fear of his mad and passionate attempts.

There can never be reconciliation between you and me, said Alcibiades; but for the

present I will defer your chastisement. And I must beg you, Agathoron, to give me back some of the ribands that I may crown the marvellous head of this universal despot-I would not have him complain of me for crowning you, and neglecting him, who in conversation is the conqueror of all mankind; and this not only once, as you were the day before yesterday, but always. Whereupon, taking some of the ribands, he crowned Socrates, and again reclined.

Then he said: You seem, my friends, to be sober, which is a thing not to be endured; you must drink-for that was the agreement under which I was admitted-and I elect myself master of the feast until you are well drunk. Let us have a large goblet, Agathon, or rather, he said, addressing the attendant, bring me that wine-cooler. The wine-cooler which had caught his eye was a vessel holding more than two quarts-this he filled and emptied, and bade the attendant fill it again for Socrates. Observe, my friends, said Alcibiades, that this ingenious trick of mine will have no effect on Socrates, for he can drink any quantity of wine and not be at all nearer being drunk. Socrates drank the cup which the attendant filled for him.

Eryximachus said! What is this Alcibiades? Are we to have neither conversation nor singing over our cups; but simply to drink as if we were thirsty?

Alcibiades replied: Hail, worthy son of a most wise and worthy sire!

The same to you, said Eryximachus; but what shall we do?

That I leave to you, said Alcibiades.

The wise physician skilled our wounds to heal shall prescribe and we will obey. What do you want?

Well, said Eryximachus, before you appeared we had passed a resolution that each one of us in turn should make a speech in praise of love, and as good a one as he could: the turn was passed round from left to right; and as all of us have spoken, and you have not spoken but have well drunken, you ought to speak, and then impose upon Socrates any task which you please, and he on his right hand neighbour, and so on.

That is good, Eryximachus, said Alcibiades; and yet the comparison, of a drunken man's speech with those of sober men is hardly fair; and I should like to know, sweet friend, whether you really believe-what Socrates was just now saying; for I can assure you that the very reverse is the fact, and that if I praise any one but himself in his presence, whether God or man, he will hardly keep his hands off me.

For shame, said Socrates.

Hold your tongue, said Alcibiades, for by Poseidon, there is no one else whom I will praise when you are-of the company.

Well then, said Eryximachus, if you like praise Socrates.

What do you think, Eryximachus-? said Alcibiades: shall I attack him: and inflict the punishment before you all?

What are you about? said Socrates; are you going to raise a laugh at my expense? Is that the meaning of your praise?

I am going to speak the truth, if you will permit me.

I not only permit, but exhort you to speak the truth.

Then I will begin at once, said Alcibiades, and if I say anything which is not true, you may interrupt me if you will, and say "that is a lie," though my intention is to speak the truth. But you must not wonder if I speak any how as things come into my mind; for the fluent and orderly enumeration of all your singularities is not a task which is easy to a man in my condition.

And now, my boys, I shall praise Socrates in a figure which will appear to him to be a caricature, and yet I speak, not to make fun of him, but only for the truth's sake. I say, that he is exactly like the busts of Silenus, which are set up in the statuary, shops, holding pipes and flutes in their mouths; and they are made to open in the middle, and have images of gods inside them. I say also that he is like Marsyas the satyr. You yourself will not deny, Socrates, that your face is like that of a satyr. Aye, and there is a resemblance in other points too. For example, you are a bully, as I can prove by witnesses, if you will not confess. And are you not a flute-player? That you are, and a performer far more wonderful than Marsyas. He indeed with instruments used to charm the souls of men by the powers of his breath, and the players of his music do so still: for the melodies of Olympus are derived from Marsyas who taught them, and these, whether they are played by a great master or by a miserable flute-girl, have a power which no others have; they alone possess the soul and reveal the wants of those who have need of gods and mysteries, because they are divine. But you produce the same effect with your words only, and do not require the flute; that is the difference between you and him. When we hear any other speaker, even very good one, he produces absolutely no effect upon us, or not much, whereas the mere fragments of you and your words, even at second-hand, and however imperfectly repeated, amaze and possess the souls of every man, woman, and child who comes within hearing of them. And if I were not, afraid that you would think me hopelessly drunk, I would have sworn as well as spoken to the influence which they have always had and still have over me. For my heart leaps within me more than that of any Corybantian reveller, and my eyes rain tears when I hear them. And I observe that many others are affected in the same manner. I have heard Pericles and other great orators, and I thought that they spoke well, but I never had any similar feeling; my soul was not stirred by them, nor was I angry at the thought of my own slavish state. But this Marsyas has often brought me to such pass, that I have felt as if I could hardly endure the life which I am leading (this, Socrates, you will admit); and I am conscious that if I did not shut my ears against him, and fly as from the voice of the siren, my fate would be like that of others,-he would transfix me, and I should grow old sitting at his feet. For he makes me confess that I

ought not to live as I do, neglecting the wants of my own soul, and busying myself with the concerns of the Athenians; therefore I hold my ears and tear myself away from him. And he is the only person who ever made me ashamed, which you might think not to be in my nature, and there is no one else who does the same. For I know that I cannot answer him or say that I ought not to do as he bids, but when I leave his presence the love of popularity gets the better of me. And therefore I run away and fly from him, and when I see him I am ashamed of what I have confessed to him. Many a time have I wished that he were dead, and yet I know that I should be much more sorry than glad, if he were to die: so that am at my wit's end.

And this is what I and many others have suffered, from the flute-playing of this satyr. Yet hear me once more while I show you how exact the image is, and how marvellous his power. For let me tell you; none of you know him; but I will reveal him to you; having begun, I must go on. See you how fond he is of the fair? He is always with them and is always being smitten by them, and then again he knows nothing and is ignorant of all thing such is the appearance which he puts on. Is he not like a Silenus in this? To be sure he is: his outer mask is the carved head of the Silenus; but, O my companions in drink, when he is opened, what temperance there is residing within! Know you that beauty and wealth and honour, at which the many wonder, are of no account with him, and are utterly despised by him: he regards not at all the persons who are gifted with them; mankind are nothing to him; all his life is spent in mocking and flouting at them. But when I opened him, and looked within at his serious purpose, I saw in him divine and golden images of such fascinating beauty that I was ready to do in a moment whatever Socrates commanded: they may have escaped the observation of others, but I saw them. Now I fancied that he was seriously enamoured of my beauty, and I thought that I should therefore have a grand opportunity of hearing him tell what he knew, for I had a wonderful opinion of the attractions of my youth. In the prosecution of this design, when I next went to him, I sent away the attendant who usually accompanied me (I will confess the whole truth, and beg you to listen; and if I speak falsely, do you, Socrates, expose the falsehood). Well, he and I were alone together, and I thought that when there was nobody with us, I should hear him speak the language which lovers use to their loves when they are by themselves, and I was delighted. Nothing of the sort; he conversed as usual, and spent the day with me and then went away. Afterwards I challenged him to the palaestra; and he wrestled and closed with me, several times when there was no one present; I fancied that I might succeed in this manner. Not a bit; I made no way with him. Lastly, as I had failed hitherto, I thought that I must take stronger measures and attack him boldly, and, as I had begun, not give him up, but see how matters stood between him and me. So I invited him to sup with me, just as if he were a fair youth, and I a designing lover. He was not easily persuaded to come; he did, however, after a while accept the invitation, and when he came the first time, he wanted to go away at once as soon as supper was over, and I had not the face to detain him. The second time, still in pursuance of my design, after we had supped, I went on conversing far into the night, and when he wanted to go away, I pretended that the hour was late and that he had much better remain. So he lay down on the couch next to me, the same on which he had supped, and there was no one but ourselves sleeping in the apartment. All this may be told without shame to any one. But what follows I could hardly tell you if I were sober. Yet as the proverb says, "In vino veritas," whether with

boys, or without them; and therefore I must speak. Nor, again, should I be justified in concealing the lofty actions of Socrates when I come to praise him. Moreover I have felt the serpent's sting; and he who has suffered, as they say, is willing to tell his fellow-sufferers only, as they alone will be likely to understand him, and will not be extreme in judging of the sayings or doings which have been wrung from his agony. For I have been bitten by a more than viper's tooth; I have known in my soul, or in my heart, or in some other part, that worst of pangs, more violent in ingenuous youth than any serpent's tooth, the pang of philosophy, which will make a man say or do anything. And you whom I see around me, Phaedrus and Agathon and Eryximachus and Pausanias and Aristodemus and Aristophanes, all of you, and I need not say Socrates himself, have had experience of the same madness and passion in your longing after wisdom. Therefore listen and excuse my doings then and my sayings now. But let the attendants and other profane and unmannered persons close up the doors of their ears.

When the lamp was put out and the servants had gone away, I thought that I must be plain with him and have no more ambiguity. So I gave him a shake, and I said: "Socrates, are you asleep?" "No," he said. "Do you know what I am meditating?" "What are you meditating?" he said. "I think," I replied, "that of all the lovers whom I have ever had you are the only one who is worthy of me, and you appear to be too modest to speak. Now I feel that I should be a fool to refuse you this or any other favour, and therefore I come to lay at your feet all that I have and all that my friends have, in the hope that you will assist me in the way of virtue, which I desire above all things, and in which I believe that you can help me better than any one else. And I should certainly have more reason to be ashamed of what wise men would say if I were to refuse a favour to such as you, than of what the world who are mostly fools, would say of me if I granted it." To these words he replied in the ironical manner which is so characteristic of him: "Alcibiades, my friend, you have indeed an elevated aim if what you say is true, and if there really is in me any power by which you may become better; truly you must see in me some rare beauty of a kind infinitely higher than any which I see in you. And therefore, if you mean to share with me and to exchange beauty for beauty, you will have greatly the advantage of me; you will gain true beauty in return for appearance-like Diomedes, gold in exchange for brass. But look again, sweet friend, and see whether you are not deceived in me. The mind begins to grow critical when the bodily eye fails, and it will be a long time before you get old." Hearing this, I said: "I have told you my purpose, which is quite serious, and do you consider what you think best for you and me." "That is good," he said; "at some other time then we will consider and act as seems best about this and about other matters." Whereupon, I fancied that was smitten, and that the words which I had uttered like arrows had wounded him, and so without waiting to hear more I got up, and throwing my coat about him crept under his threadbare cloak, as the time of year was winter, and there I lay during the whole night having this wonderful monster in my arms. This again, Socrates, will not be denied by you. And yet, notwithstanding all, he was so superior to my solicitations, so contemptuous and derisive and disdainful of my beauty-which really, as I fancied, had some attractions-hear, O judges; for judges you shall be of the haughty virtue of Socrates-nothing more happened, but in the morning when I awoke (let all the gods and goddesses be my witnesses) I arose as from the couch of a father or an elder brother.

What do you suppose must have been my feelings, after this rejection, at the thought of my own dishonour? And yet I could not help wondering at his natural temperance and self-restraint and manliness. I never imagined that I could have met with a man such as he is in wisdom and endurance. And therefore I could not be angry with him or renounce his company, any more than I could hope to win him. For I well knew that if Ajax could not be wounded by steel, much less he by money; and my only chance of captivating him by my personal attractions had faded. So I was at my wit's end; no one was ever more hopelessly enslaved by another. All this happened before he and I went on the expedition to Potidaea; there we messed together, and I had the opportunity of observing his extraordinary power of sustaining fatigue. His endurance was simply marvellous when, being cut off from our supplies, we were compelled to go without food-on such occasions, which often happen in time of war, he was superior not only to me but to everybody; there was no one to be compared to him. Yet at a festival he was the only person who had any real powers of enjoyment; though not willing to drink, he could if compelled beat us all at that,-wonderful to relate! no human being had ever seen Socrates drunk; and his powers, if I am not mistaken, will be tested before long. His fortitude in enduring cold was also surprising. There was a severe frost, for the winter in that region is really tremendous, and everybody else either remained indoors, or if they went out had on an amazing quantity of clothes, and were well shod, and had their feet swathed in felt and fleeces: in the midst of this, Socrates with his bare feet on the ice and in his ordinary dress marched better than the other soldiers who had shoes, and they looked daggers at him because he seemed to despise them.

I have told you one tale, and now I must tell you another, which is worth hearing, 'Of the doings and sufferings of the enduring man', while he was on the expedition. One morning he was thinking about something which he could not resolve; he would not give it up, but continued thinking from early dawn until noon-there he stood fixed in thought; and at noon attention was drawn to him, and the rumour ran through the wondering crowd that Socrates had been standing and thinking about something ever since the break of day. At last, in the evening after supper, some Ionians out of curiosity (I should explain that this was not in winter but in summer), brought out their mats and slept in the open air that they might watch him and see whether he would stand all night. There he stood until the following morning; and with the return of light he offered up a prayer to the sun, and went his way. I will also tell, if you please-and indeed I am bound to tell of his courage in battle; for who but he saved my life? Now this was the engagement in which I received the prize of valour: for I was wounded and he would not leave me, but he rescued me and my arms; and he ought to have received the prize of valour which the generals wanted to confer on me partly on account of my rank, and I told them so, (this, again Socrates will not impeach or deny), but he was more eager than the generals that I and not he should have the prize. There was another occasion on which his behaviour was very remarkable-in the flight of the army after the battle of Delium, where he served among the heavy-armed-I had a better opportunity of seeing him than at Potidaea, for I was myself on horseback, and therefore comparatively out of danger. He and Laches were retreating, for the troops were in flight, and I met them and told them not to be discouraged, and promised to remain with them; and there you might see him, Aristophanes, as you describe, just as he is in the streets of Athens, stalking like a and rolling his eyes, calmly contemplating enemies as well as friends, and making

very intelligible to anybody, even from a distance, that whoever attacked him would be likely to meet with a stout resistance; and in this way he and his companion escaped-for this is the sort of man who is never touched in war; those only are pursued who are running away headlong. I particularly observed how superior he was to Laches in presence of mind. Many are the marvels which I might narrate in praise of Socrates; most of his ways might perhaps be paralleled in another man, but his absolute unlikeness to any human being that is or ever has been is perfectly astonishing. You may imagine Brasidas and others to have been like Achilles; or you may imagine Nestor and Antenor to have been like Perides; and the same may be said of other famous men, but of this strange being you will never be able to find any likeness, however remote, either among men who now are or who ever have been-other than that which I have already suggested of Silenus and the satyrs; and they represent in a figure not only himself, but his words. For, although I forgot to mention this to you before, his words are like the images of Silenus which open; they are ridiculous when you first hear them; he clothes himself in language that is like the skin of the wanton satyr-for his talk is of pack-asses and smiths and cobblers and curriers, and he is always repeating the same things in the same words, so that any ignorant or inexperienced person might feel disposed to laugh at him; but he who opens the bust and sees what is within will find that they are the only words which have a meaning in them, and also the most divine, abounding in fair images of virtue, and of the widest comprehension, or rather extending to the whole duty of a good and honourable man.

This, friends, is my praise of Socrates. I have added my blame of him for his ill-treatment of me; and he has ill-treated not only me, but Charmides the son of Glaucon, and Euthydemus the son of Diocles, and many others in the same way-beginning as their lover he has ended by making them pay their addresses to him. Wherefore I say to you, Agathon, "Be no deceived by him; learn from me: and take warning, and do not be a fool and learn by experience, as the proverb says."

When Alcibiades had finished, there was a laugh at his outspokenness; for he seemed to be still in love with Socrates. You are sober, Alcibiades, said Socrates, or you would never have gone so far about to hide the purpose of your satyr's praises, for all this long story is only an ingenious circumlocution, of which the point comes in by the way at the end; you want to get up a quarrel between me and Agathon, and your notion-is that I ought to love you and nobody else, and that you and you only ought to love Agathon. But the plot of this Satyric or Silenic drama has been detected, and you must not allow him, Agathon, to set us at variance.

I believe you are right, said Agathon, and I am disposed to think that his intention in placing himself between you and me was only to divide us; but he shall gain nothing by that move; for I will go and lie on the couch next to you.

Yes, yes, replied Socrates, by all means come here and lie on the couch below me.

Alas, said Alcibiades, how I am fooled by this man; he is determined to get the better of me at every turn. I do beseech you, allow Agathon to lie between us.

Certainly not, said Socrates, as you praised me, and I in turn ought to praise my neighbour on the right, he will be out of order in praising me again when he ought rather to be praised by me, and I must entreat you to consent to this, and not be jealous, for I have a great desire to praise the youth.

Hurrah! cried Agathon, I will rise instantly, that I may be praised by Socrates.

The usual way, said Alcibiades; where Socrates is, no one else has any chance with the fair; and now how readily has he invented a specious reason for attracting Agathon to himself.

Agathon arose in order that he might take his place on the couch by Socrates, when suddenly a band of revellers entered, and spoiled the order of the banquet. Some one who was going out having left the door open, they had found their way in, and made themselves at home; great confusion ensued, and every one was compelled to drink large quantities of wine. Aristodemus said that Eryximachus, Phaedrus, and others went away—he himself fell asleep, and as the nights were long took a good rest: he was awakened towards daybreak by a crowing of cocks, and when he awoke, the others were either asleep, or had gone away; there remained only Socrates, Aristophanes, and Agathon, who were drinking out of a large goblet which they passed round, and Socrates was discoursing to them. Aristodemus was only half awake, and he did not hear the beginning of the discourse; the chief thing which he remembered was Socrates compelling the other two to acknowledge that the genius of comedy was the same with that of tragedy, and that the true artist in tragedy was an artist in comedy also. To this they were constrained to assent, being drowsy, and not quite following the argument. And first of all Aristophanes dropped off, then, when the day was already dawning, Agathon. Socrates, having laid them to sleep, rose to depart; Aristodemus, as his manner was, following him. At the Lyceum he took a bath, and passed the day as usual. In the evening he retired to rest at his own home.

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Timaeus

Timaeus
by Plato

Written circa 360 B.C.
translated by Benjamin Jowett

PERSONS OF THE DIALOGUE: SOCRATES; CRITIAS; TIMAEUS; HERMOCRATES

Socrates. One, two, three; but where, my dear Timaeus, is the fourth of those who were yesterday my guests and are to be my entertainers to-day?

Timaeus. He has been taken ill, Socrates; for he would not willingly have been absent from this gathering.

Soc. Then, if he is not coming, you and the two others must supply his place.

Tim. Certainly, and we will do all that we can; having been handsomely entertained by you yesterday, those of us who remain should be only too glad to return your hospitality.

Soc. Do you remember what were the points of which I required you to speak?

Tim. We remember some of them, and you will be here to remind us of anything which we have forgotten: or rather, if we are not troubling you, will you briefly recapitulate the whole, and then the particulars will be more firmly fixed in our memories?

Soc. To be sure I will: the chief theme of my yesterday's discourse was the State-how constituted and of what citizens composed it would seem likely to be most perfect.

Tim. Yes, Socrates; and what you said of it was very much to our mind.

Soc. Did we not begin by separating the husbandmen and the artisans from the class of defenders of the State?

Tim. Yes.

Soc. And when we had given to each one that single employment and particular art which was suited to his nature, we spoke of those who were intended to be our warriors, and said that they were to be guardians of the city against attacks from within as well as from without, and to have no other employment; they were to be merciful in judging their subjects, of whom they were by nature friends, but fierce to their enemies, when they came across them in battle.

Tim. Exactly.

Soc. We said, if I am not mistaken, that the guardians should be gifted with a temperament in a high degree both passionate and philosophical; and that then they would be as they ought to be, gentle to their friends and fierce with their enemies.

Tim. Certainly.

Soc. And what did we say of their education? Were they not to be trained in gymnastic, and music, and all other sorts of knowledge which were proper for them?

Tim. Very true.

Soc. And being thus trained they were not to consider gold or silver or anything else to be their own private property; they were to be like hired troops, receiving pay for keeping guard from those who were protected by them-the pay was to be no more than would suffice for men of simple life; and they were to spend in common, and to live together in the continual practice of virtue, which was to be their sole pursuit.

Tim. That was also said.

Soc. Neither did we forget the women; of whom we declared, that their natures should be assimilated and brought into harmony with those of the men, and that common pursuits should be assigned to them both in time of war and in their ordinary life.

Tim. That, again, was as you say.

Soc. And what about the procreation of children? Or rather not the proposal too singular to be forgotten? for all wives and children were to be in common, to the intent that no one should ever know his own child, but they were to imagine that they were all one family; those who were within a suitable limit of age were to be brothers and sisters, those who were of an elder generation parents and grandparents, and those of a younger children and grandchildren.

Tim. Yes, and the proposal is easy to remember, as you say.

Soc. And do you also remember how, with a view of securing as far as we could the best breed, we said that the chief magistrates, male and female, should contrive secretly, by the use of certain lots, so to arrange the nuptial meeting, that the bad of either sex and the good of either sex might pair with their like; and there was to be no quarrelling on this account, for they would imagine that the union was a mere accident, and was to be attributed to the lot?

Tim. I remember.

Soc. And you remember how we said that the children of the good parents were to be educated, and the children of the bad secretly dispersed among the inferior citizens;

and while they were all growing up the rulers were to be on the look-out, and to bring up from below in their turn those who were worthy, and those among themselves who were unworthy were to take the places of those who came up?

Tim. True.

Soc. Then have I now given you all the heads of our yesterday's discussion? Or is there anything more, my dear Timaeus, which has been omitted?

Tim. Nothing, Socrates; it was just as you have said.

Soc. I should like, before proceeding further, to tell you how I feel about the State which we have described. I might compare myself to a person who, on beholding beautiful animals either created by the painter's art, or, better still, alive but at rest, is seized with a desire of seeing them in motion or engaged in some struggle or conflict to which their forms appear suited; this is my feeling about the State which we have been describing. There are conflicts which all cities undergo, and I should like to hear some one tell of our own city carrying on a struggle against her neighbours, and how she went out to war in a becoming manner, and when at war showed by the greatness of her actions and the magnanimity of her words in dealing with other cities a result worthy of her training and education. Now I, Critias and Hermocrates, am conscious that I myself should never be able to celebrate the city and her citizens in a befitting manner, and I am not surprised at my own incapacity; to me the wonder is rather that the poets present as well as past are no better-not that I mean to depreciate them; but every one can see that they are a tribe of imitators, and will imitate best and most easily the life in which they have been brought up; while that which is beyond the range of a man's education he finds hard to carry out in action, and still harder adequately to represent in language. I am aware that the Sophists have plenty of brave words and fair conceits, but I am afraid that being only wanderers from one city to another, and having never had habitations of their own, they may fail in their conception of philosophers and statesmen, and may not know what they do and say in time of war, when they are fighting or holding parley with their enemies. And thus people of your class are the only ones remaining who are fitted by nature and education to take part at once both in politics and philosophy. Here is Timaeus, of Locris in Italy, a city which has admirable laws, and who is himself in wealth and rank the equal of any of his fellow-citizens; he has held the most important and honourable offices in his own state, and, as I believe, has scaled the heights of all philosophy; and here is Critias, whom every Athenian knows to be no novice in the matters of which we are speaking; and as to, Hermocrates, I am assured by many witnesses that his genius and education qualify him to take part in any speculation of the kind. And therefore yesterday when I saw that you wanted me to describe the formation of the State, I readily assented, being very well aware, that, if you only would, none were better qualified to carry the discussion further, and that when you had engaged our city in a suitable war, you of all men living could best exhibit her playing a fitting part. When I had completed my task, I in return imposed this other task upon you. You conferred together and agreed to entertain me to-day, as I had entertained you, with a feast of discourse. Here am I in festive array, and no man can be more ready for the promised banquet.

Her. And we too, Socrates, as Timaeus says, will not be wanting in enthusiasm; and there is no excuse for not complying with your request. As soon as we arrived yesterday at the guest-chamber of Critias, with whom we are staying, or rather on our way thither, we talked the matter over, and he told us an ancient tradition, which I wish, Critias, that you would repeat to Socrates, so that he may help us to judge whether it will satisfy his requirements or not.

Crit. I will, if Timaeus, who is our other partner, approves.

Tim. I quite approve.

Crit. Then listen, Socrates, to a tale which, though strange, is certainly true, having been attested by Solon, who was the wisest of the seven sages. He was a relative and a dear friend of my great-grandfather, Dropides, as he himself says in many passages of his poems; and he told the story to Critias, my grandfather, who remembered and repeated it to us. There were of old, he said, great and marvellous actions of the Athenian city, which have passed into oblivion through lapse of time and the destruction of mankind, and one in particular, greater than all the rest. This we will now rehearse. It will be a fitting monument of our gratitude to you, and a hymn of praise true and worthy of the goddess, on this her day of festival.

Soc. Very good. And what is this ancient famous action of the Athenians, which Critias declared, on the authority of Solon, to be not a mere legend, but an actual fact?

Crit. I will tell an old-world story which I heard from an aged man; for Critias, at the time of telling it, was as he said, nearly ninety years of age, and I was about ten. Now the day was that day of the Apaturia which is called the Registration of Youth, at which, according to custom, our parents gave prizes for recitations, and the poems of several poets were recited by us boys, and many of us sang the poems of Solon, which at that time had not gone out of fashion. One of our tribe, either because he thought so or to please Critias, said that in his judgment Solon was not only the wisest of men, but also the noblest of poets. The old man, as I very well remember, brightened up at hearing this and said, smiling: Yes, Amynander, if Solon had only, like other poets, made poetry the business of his life, and had completed the tale which he brought with him from Egypt, and had not been compelled, by reason of the factions and troubles which he found stirring in his own country when he came home, to attend to other matters, in my opinion he would have been as famous as Homer or Hesiod, or any poet.

And what was the tale about, Critias? said Amynander.

About the greatest action which the Athenians ever did, and which ought to have been the most famous, but, through the lapse of time and the destruction of the actors, it has not come down to us.

Tell us, said the other, the whole story, and how and from whom Solon heard this veritable tradition.

He replied:-In the Egyptian Delta, at the head of which the river Nile divides, there is a certain district which is called the district of Sais, and the great city of the district is also called Sais, and is the city from which King Amasis came. The citizens have a deity for their foundress; she is called in the Egyptian tongue Neith, and is asserted by them to be the same whom the Hellenes call Athene; they are great lovers of the Athenians, and say that they are in some way related to them. To this city came Solon, and was received there with great honour; he asked the priests who were most skilful in such matters, about antiquity, and made the discovery that neither he nor any other Hellene knew anything worth mentioning about the times of old. On one occasion, wishing to draw them on to speak of antiquity, he began to tell about the most ancient things in our part of the world-about Phoroneus, who is called "the first man," and about Niobe; and after the Deluge, of the survival of Deucalion and Pyrrha; and he traced the genealogy of their descendants, and reckoning up the dates, tried to compute how many years ago the events of which he was speaking happened. Thereupon one of the priests, who was of a very great age, said: O Solon, Solon, you Hellenes are never anything but children, and there is not an old man among you. Solon in return asked him what he meant. I mean to say, he replied, that in mind you are all young; there is no old opinion handed down among you by ancient tradition, nor any science which is hoary with age. And I will tell you why. There have been, and will be again, many destructions of mankind arising out of many causes; the greatest have been brought about by the agencies of fire and water, and other lesser ones by innumerable other causes. There is a story, which even you have preserved, that once upon a time Paethon, the son of Helios, having yoked the steeds in his father's chariot, because he was not able to drive them in the path of his father, burnt up all that was upon the earth, and was himself destroyed by a thunderbolt. Now this has the form of a myth, but really signifies a declination of the bodies moving in the heavens around the earth, and a great conflagration of things upon the earth, which recurs after long intervals; at such times those who live upon the mountains and in dry and lofty places are more liable to destruction than those who dwell by rivers or on the seashore. And from this calamity the Nile, who is our never-failing saviour, delivers and preserves us. When, on the other hand, the gods purge the earth with a deluge of water, the survivors in your country are herdsmen and shepherds who dwell on the mountains, but those who, like you, live in cities are carried by the rivers into the sea. Whereas in this land, neither then nor at any other time, does the water come down from above on the fields, having always a tendency to come up from below; for which reason the traditions preserved here are the most ancient.

The fact is, that wherever the extremity of winter frost or of summer does not prevent, mankind exist, sometimes in greater, sometimes in lesser numbers. And whatever happened either in your country or in ours, or in any other region of which we are informed-if there were any actions noble or great or in any other way remarkable, they have all been written down by us of old, and are preserved in our temples. Whereas just when you and other nations are beginning to be provided with letters and the other requisites of civilized life, after the usual interval, the stream from heaven, like a pestilence, comes pouring down, and leaves only those of you who are destitute of letters and education; and so you have to begin all over again like children, and know nothing of what happened in ancient times, either among us or among yourselves. As

for those genealogies of yours which you just now recounted to us, Solon, they are no better than the tales of children. In the first place you remember a single deluge only, but there were many previous ones; in the next place, you do not know that there formerly dwelt in your land the fairest and noblest race of men which ever lived, and that you and your whole city are descended from a small seed or remnant of them which survived. And this was unknown to you, because, for many generations, the survivors of that destruction died, leaving no written word. For there was a time, Solon, before the great deluge of all, when the city which now is Athens was first in war and in every way the best governed of all cities, is said to have performed the noblest deeds and to have had the fairest constitution of any of which tradition tells, under the face of heaven.

Solon marvelled at his words, and earnestly requested the priests to inform him exactly and in order about these former citizens. You are welcome to hear about them, Solon, said the priest, both for your own sake and for that of your city, and above all, for the sake of the goddess who is the common patron and parent and educator of both our cities. She founded your city a thousand years before ours, receiving from the Earth and Hephaestus the seed of your race, and afterwards she founded ours, of which the constitution is recorded in our sacred registers to be eight thousand years old. As touching your citizens of nine thousand years ago, I will briefly inform you of their laws and of their most famous action; the exact particulars of the whole we will hereafter go through at our leisure in the sacred registers themselves. If you compare these very laws with ours you will find that many of ours are the counterpart of yours as they were in the olden time. In the first place, there is the caste of priests, which is separated from all the others; next, there are the artificers, who ply their several crafts by themselves and do not intermix; and also there is the class of shepherds and of hunters, as well as that of husbandmen; and you will observe, too, that the warriors in Egypt are distinct from all the other classes, and are commanded by the law to devote themselves solely to military pursuits; moreover, the weapons which they carry are shields and spears, a style of equipment which the goddess taught of Asiatics first to us, as in your part of the world first to you. Then as to wisdom, do you observe how our law from the very first made a study of the whole order of things, extending even to prophecy and medicine which gives health, out of these divine elements deriving what was needful for human life, and adding every sort of knowledge which was akin to them. All this order and arrangement the goddess first imparted to you when establishing your city; and she chose the spot of earth in which you were born, because she saw that the happy temperament of the seasons in that land would produce the wisest of men. Wherefore the goddess, who was a lover both of war and of wisdom, selected and first of all settled that spot which was the most likely to produce men likest herself. And there you dwelt, having such laws as these and still better ones, and excelled all mankind in all virtue, as became the children and disciples of the gods.

Many great and wonderful deeds are recorded of your state in our histories. But one of them exceeds all the rest in greatness and valour. For these histories tell of a mighty power which unprovoked made an expedition against the whole of Europe and Asia, and to which your city put an end. This power came forth out of the Atlantic Ocean, for in those days the Atlantic was navigable; and there was an island situated in front of the straits which are by you called the Pillars of Heracles; the island was larger than Libya

and Asia put together, and was the way to other islands, and from these you might pass to the whole of the opposite continent which surrounded the true ocean; for this sea which is within the Straits of Heracles is only a harbour, having a narrow entrance, but that other is a real sea, and the surrounding land may be most truly called a boundless continent. Now in this island of Atlantis there was a great and wonderful empire which had rule over the whole island and several others, and over parts of the continent, and, furthermore, the men of Atlantis had subjected the parts of Libya within the columns of Heracles as far as Egypt, and of Europe as far as Tyrrhenia. This vast power, gathered into one, endeavoured to subdue at a blow our country and yours and the whole of the region within the straits; and then, Solon, your country shone forth, in the excellence of her virtue and strength, among all mankind. She was pre-eminent in courage and military skill, and was the leader of the Hellenes. And when the rest fell off from her, being compelled to stand alone, after having undergone the very extremity of danger, she defeated and triumphed over the invaders, and preserved from slavery those who were not yet subjugated, and generously liberated all the rest of us who dwell within the pillars. But afterwards there occurred violent earthquakes and floods; and in a single day and night of misfortune all your warlike men in a body sank into the earth, and the island of Atlantis in like manner disappeared in the depths of the sea. For which reason the sea in those parts is impassable and impenetrable, because there is a shoal of mud in the way; and this was caused by the subsidence of the island.

I have told you briefly, Socrates, what the aged Critias heard from Solon and related to us. And when you were speaking yesterday about your city and citizens, the tale which I have just been repeating to you came into my mind, and I remarked with astonishment how, by some mysterious coincidence, you agreed in almost every particular with the narrative of Solon; but I did not like to speak at the moment. For a long time had elapsed, and I had forgotten too much; I thought that I must first of all run over the narrative in my own mind, and then I would speak. And so I readily assented to your request yesterday, considering that in all such cases the chief difficulty is to find a tale suitable to our purpose, and that with such a tale we should be fairly well provided.

And therefore, as Hermocrates has told you, on my way home yesterday I at once communicated the tale to my companions as I remembered it; and after I left them, during the night by thinking I recovered nearly the whole it. Truly, as is often said, the lessons of our childhood make wonderful impression on our memories; for I am not sure that I could remember all the discourse of yesterday, but I should be much surprised if I forgot any of these things which I have heard very long ago. I listened at the time with childlike interest to the old man's narrative; he was very ready to teach me, and I asked him again and again to repeat his words, so that like an indelible picture they were branded into my mind. As soon as the day broke, I rehearsed them as he spoke them to my companions, that they, as well as myself, might have something to say. And now, Socrates, to make an end my preface, I am ready to tell you the whole tale. I will give you not only the general heads, but the particulars, as they were told to me. The city and citizens, which you yesterday described to us in fiction, we will now transfer to the world of reality. It shall be the ancient city of Athens, and we will suppose that the citizens whom you imagined, were our veritable ancestors, of whom the priest spoke; they will perfectly harmonise, and there will be no inconsistency in saying that the

citizens of your republic are these ancient Athenians. Let us divide the subject among us, and all endeavour according to our ability gracefully to execute the task which you have imposed upon us. Consider then, Socrates, if this narrative is suited to the purpose, or whether we should seek for some other instead.

Soc. And what other, Critias, can we find that will be better than this, which is natural and suitable to the festival of the goddess, and has the very great advantage of being a fact and not a fiction? How or where shall we find another if we abandon this? We cannot, and therefore you must tell the tale, and good luck to you; and I in return for my yesterday's discourse will now rest and be a listener.

Crit. Let me proceed to explain to you, Socrates, the order in which we have arranged our entertainment. Our intention is, that Timaeus, who is the most of an astronomer amongst us, and has made the nature of the universe his special study, should speak first, beginning with the generation of the world and going down to the creation of man; next, I am to receive the men whom he has created of whom some will have profited by the excellent education which you have given them; and then, in accordance with the tale of Solon, and equally with his law, we will bring them into court and make them citizens, as if they were those very Athenians whom the sacred Egyptian record has recovered from oblivion, and thenceforward we will speak of them as Athenians and fellow-citizens.

Soc. I see that I shall receive in my turn a perfect and splendid feast of reason. And now, Timaeus, you, I suppose, should speak next, after duly calling upon the Gods.

Tim. All men, Socrates, who have any degree of right feeling, at the beginning of every enterprise, whether small or great, always call upon God. And we, too, who are going to discourse of the nature of the universe, how created or how existing without creation, if we be not altogether out of our wits, must invoke the aid of Gods and Goddesses and pray that our words may be acceptable to them and consistent with themselves. Let this, then, be our invocation of the Gods, to which I add an exhortation of myself to speak in such manner as will be most intelligible to you, and will most accord with my own intent.

First then, in my judgment, we must make a distinction and ask, What is that which always is and has no becoming; and what is that which is always becoming and never is? That which is apprehended by intelligence and reason is always in the same state; but that which is conceived by opinion with the help of sensation and without reason, is always in a process of becoming and perishing and never really is. Now everything that becomes or is created must of necessity be created by some cause, for without a cause nothing can be created. The work of the creator, whenever he looks to the unchangeable and fashions the form and nature of his work after an unchangeable pattern, must necessarily be made fair and perfect; but when he looks to the created only, and uses a created pattern, it is not fair or perfect. Was the heaven then or the world, whether called by this or by any other more appropriate name-assuming the name, I am asking a question which has to be asked at the beginning of an enquiry about anything-was the world, I say, always in existence and without beginning? or

created, and had it a beginning? Created, I reply, being visible and tangible and having a body, and therefore sensible; and all sensible things are apprehended by opinion and sense and are in a process of creation and created. Now that which is created must, as we affirm, of necessity be created by a cause. But the father and maker of all this universe is past finding out; and even if we found him, to tell of him to all men would be impossible. And there is still a question to be asked about him: Which of the patterns had the artificer in view when he made the world-the pattern of the unchangeable, or of that which is created? If the world be indeed fair and the artificer good, it is manifest that he must have looked to that which is eternal; but if what cannot be said without blasphemy is true, then to the created pattern. Every one will see that he must have looked to, the eternal; for the world is the fairest of creations and he is the best of causes. And having been created in this way, the world has been framed in the likeness of that which is apprehended by reason and mind and is unchangeable, and must therefore of necessity, if this is admitted, be a copy of something. Now it is all-important that the beginning of everything should be according to nature. And in speaking of the copy and the original we may assume that words are akin to the matter which they describe; when they relate to the lasting and permanent and intelligible, they ought to be lasting and unalterable, and, as far as their nature allows, irrefutable and immovable-nothing less. But when they express only the copy or likeness and not the eternal things themselves, they need only be likely and analogous to the real words. As being is to becoming, so is truth to belief. If then, Socrates, amid the many opinions about the gods and the generation of the universe, we are not able to give notions which are altogether and in every respect exact and consistent with one another, do not be surprised. Enough, if we adduce probabilities as likely as any others; for we must remember that I who am the speaker, and you who are the judges, are only mortal men, and we ought to accept the tale which is probable and enquire no further.

Soc. Excellent, Timaeus; and we will do precisely as you bid us. The prelude is charming, and is already accepted by us-may we beg of you to proceed to the strain?

Tim. Let me tell you then why the creator made this world of generation. He was good, and the good can never have any jealousy of anything. And being free from jealousy, he desired that all things should be as like himself as they could be. This is in the truest sense the origin of creation and of the world, as we shall do well in believing on the testimony of wise men: God desired that all things should be good and nothing bad, so far as this was attainable. Wherefore also finding the whole visible sphere not at rest, but moving in an irregular and disorderly fashion, out of disorder he brought order, considering that this was in every way better than the other. Now the deeds of the best could never be or have been other than the fairest; and the creator, reflecting on the things which are by nature visible, found that no unintelligent creature taken as a whole was fairer than the intelligent taken as a whole; and that intelligence could not be present in anything which was devoid of soul. For which reason, when he was framing the universe, he put intelligence in soul, and soul in body, that he might be the creator of a work which was by nature fairest and best. Wherefore, using the language of probability, we may say that the world became a living creature truly endowed with soul and intelligence by the providence of God.

This being supposed, let us proceed to the next stage: In the likeness of what animal did the Creator make the world? It would be an unworthy thing to liken it to any nature which exists as a part only; for nothing can be beautiful which is like any imperfect thing; but let us suppose the world to be the very image of that whole of which all other animals both individually and in their tribes are portions. For the original of the universe contains in itself all intelligible beings, just as this world comprehends us and all other visible creatures. For the Deity, intending to make this world like the fairest and most perfect of intelligible beings, framed one visible animal comprehending within itself all other animals of a kindred nature. Are we right in saying that there is one world, or that they are many and infinite? There must be one only, if the created copy is to accord with the original. For that which includes all other intelligible creatures cannot have a second or companion; in that case there would be need of another living being which would include both, and of which they would be parts, and the likeness would be more truly said to resemble not them, but that other which included them. In order then that the world might be solitary, like the perfect animal, the creator made not two worlds or an infinite number of them; but there is and ever will be one only-begotten and created heaven.

Now that which is created is of necessity corporeal, and also visible and tangible. And nothing is visible where there is no fire, or tangible which has no solidity, and nothing is solid without earth. Wherefore also God in the beginning of creation made the body of the universe to consist of fire and earth. But two things cannot be rightly put together without a third; there must be some bond of union between them. And the fairest bond is that which makes the most complete fusion of itself and the things which it combines; and proportion is best adapted to effect such a union. For whenever in any three numbers, whether cube or square, there is a mean, which is to the last term what the first term is to it; and again, when the mean is to the first term as the last term is to the mean-then the mean becoming first and last, and the first and last both becoming means, they will all of them of necessity come to be the same, and having become the same with one another will be all one. If the universal frame had been created a surface only and having no depth, a single mean would have sufficed to bind together itself and the other terms; but now, as the world must be solid, and solid bodies are always compacted not by one mean but by two, God placed water and air in the mean between fire and earth, and made them to have the same proportion so far as was possible (as fire is to air so is air to water, and as air is to water so is water to earth); and thus he bound and put together a visible and tangible heaven. And for these reasons, and out of such elements which are in number four, the body of the world was created, and it was harmonised by proportion, and therefore has the spirit of friendship; and having been reconciled to itself, it was indissoluble by the hand of any other than the framer.

Now the creation took up the whole of each of the four elements; for the Creator compounded the world out of all the fire and all the water and all the air and all the earth, leaving no part of any of them nor any power of them outside. His intention was, in the first place, that the animal should be as far as possible a perfect whole and of perfect parts: secondly, that it should be one, leaving no remnants out of which another such world might be created: and also that it should be free from old age and unaffected by disease. Considering that if heat and cold and other powerful forces which unite

bodies surround and attack them from without when they are unprepared, they decompose them, and by bringing diseases and old age upon them, make them waste away-for this cause and on these grounds he made the world one whole, having every part entire, and being therefore perfect and not liable to old age and disease. And he gave to the world the figure which was suitable and also natural. Now to the animal which was to comprehend all animals, that figure was suitable which comprehends within itself all other figures. Wherefore he made the world in the form of a globe, round as from a lathe, having its extremes in every direction equidistant from the centre, the most perfect and the most like itself of all figures; for he considered that the like is infinitely fairer than the unlike. This he finished off, making the surface smooth all around for many reasons; in the first place, because the living being had no need of eyes when there was nothing remaining outside him to be seen; nor of ears when there was nothing to be heard; and there was no surrounding atmosphere to be breathed; nor would there have been any use of organs by the help of which he might receive his food or get rid of what he had already digested, since there was nothing which went from him or came into him: for there was nothing beside him. Of design he was created thus, his own waste providing his own food, and all that he did or suffered taking place in and by himself. For the Creator conceived that a being which was self-sufficient would be far more excellent than one which lacked anything; and, as he had no need to take anything or defend himself against any one, the Creator did not think it necessary to bestow upon him hands: nor had he any need of feet, nor of the whole apparatus of walking; but the movement suited to his spherical form was assigned to him, being of all the seven that which is most appropriate to mind and intelligence; and he was made to move in the same manner and on the same spot, within his own limits revolving in a circle. All the other six motions were taken away from him, and he was made not to partake of their deviations. And as this circular movement required no feet, the universe was created without legs and without feet.

Such was the whole plan of the eternal God about the god that was to be, to whom for this reason he gave a body, smooth and even, having a surface in every direction equidistant from the centre, a body entire and perfect, and formed out of perfect bodies. And in the centre he put the soul, which he diffused throughout the body, making it also to be the exterior environment of it; and he made the universe a circle moving in a circle, one and solitary, yet by reason of its excellence able to converse with itself, and needing no other friendship or acquaintance. Having these purposes in view he created the world a blessed god.

Now God did not make the soul after the body, although we are speaking of them in this order; for having brought them together he would never have allowed that the elder should be ruled by the younger; but this is a random manner of speaking which we have, because somehow we ourselves too are very much under the dominion of chance. Whereas he made the soul in origin and excellence prior to and older than the body, to be the ruler and mistress, of whom the body was to be the subject. And he made her out of the following elements and on this wise: Out of the indivisible and unchangeable, and also out of that which is divisible and has to do with material bodies, he compounded a third and intermediate kind of essence, partaking of the nature of the same and of the other, and this compound he placed accordingly in a mean between

the indivisible, and the divisible and material. He took the three elements of the same, the other, and the essence, and mingled them into one form, compressing by force the reluctant and unsociable nature of the other into the same. When he had mingled them with the essence and out of three made one, he again divided this whole into as many portions as was fitting, each portion being a compound of the same, the other, and the essence. And he proceeded to divide after this manner:-First of all, he took away one part of the whole [1], and then he separated a second part which was double the first [2], and then he took away a third part which was half as much again as the second and three times as much as the first [3], and then he took a fourth part which was twice as much as the second [4], and a fifth part which was three times the third [9], and a sixth part which was eight times the first [8], and a seventh part which was twenty-seven times the first [27]. After this he filled up the double intervals [i.e. between 1, 2, 4, 8] and the triple [i.e. between 1, 3, 9, 27] cutting off yet other portions from the mixture and placing them in the intervals, so that in each interval there were two kinds of means, the one exceeding and exceeded by equal parts of its extremes [as for example 1, $\frac{4}{3}$, 2, in which the mean $\frac{4}{3}$ is one-third of 1 more than 1, and one-third of 2 less than 2], the other being that kind of mean which exceeds and is exceeded by an equal number. Where there were intervals of $\frac{3}{2}$ and of $\frac{4}{3}$ and of $\frac{9}{8}$, made by the connecting terms in the former intervals, he filled up all the intervals of $\frac{4}{3}$ with the interval of $\frac{9}{8}$, leaving a fraction over; and the interval which this fraction expressed was in the ratio of 256 to 243. And thus the whole mixture out of which he cut these portions was all exhausted by him. This entire compound he divided lengthways into two parts, which he joined to one another at the centre like the letter X, and bent them into a circular form, connecting them with themselves and each other at the point opposite to their original meeting-point; and, comprehending them in a uniform revolution upon the same axis, he made the one the outer and the other the inner circle. Now the motion of the outer circle he called the motion of the same, and the motion of the inner circle the motion of the other or diverse. The motion of the same he carried round by the side to the right, and the motion of the diverse diagonally to the left. And he gave dominion to the motion of the same and like, for that he left single and undivided; but the inner motion he divided in six places and made seven unequal circles having their intervals in ratios of two-and three, three of each, and bade the orbits proceed in a direction opposite to one another; and three [Sun, Mercury, Venus] he made to move with equal swiftness, and the remaining four [Moon, Saturn, Mars, Jupiter] to move with unequal swiftness to the three and to one another, but in due proportion.

Now when the Creator had framed the soul according to his will, he formed within her the corporeal universe, and brought the two together, and united them centre to centre. The soul, interfused everywhere from the centre to the circumference of heaven, of which also she is the external envelopment, herself turning in herself, began a divine beginning of never ceasing and rational life enduring throughout all time. The body of heaven is visible, but the soul is invisible, and partakes of reason and harmony, and being made by the best of intellectual and everlasting natures, is the best of things created. And because she is composed of the same and of the other and of the essence, these three, and is divided and united in due proportion, and in her revolutions returns upon herself, the soul, when touching anything which has essence, whether dispersed in parts or undivided, is stirred through all her powers, to declare the

sameness or difference of that thing and some other; and to what individuals are related, and by what affected, and in what way and how and when, both in the world of generation and in the world of immutable being. And when reason, which works with equal truth, whether she be in the circle of the diverse or of the same—in voiceless silence holding her onward course in the sphere of the self-moved—when reason, I say, is hovering around the sensible world and when the circle of the diverse also moving truly imparts the intimations of sense to the whole soul, then arise opinions and beliefs sure and certain. But when reason is concerned with the rational, and the circle of the same moving smoothly declares it, then intelligence and knowledge are necessarily perfected. And if any one affirms that in which these two are found to be other than the soul, he will say the very opposite of the truth.

When the father creator saw the creature which he had made moving and living, the created image of the eternal gods, he rejoiced, and in his joy determined to make the copy still more like the original; and as this was eternal, he sought to make the universe eternal, so far as might be. Now the nature of the ideal being was everlasting, but to bestow this attribute in its fulness upon a creature was impossible. Wherefore he resolved to have a moving image of eternity, and when he set in order the heaven, he made this image eternal but moving according to number, while eternity itself rests in unity; and this image we call time. For there were no days and nights and months and years before the heaven was created, but when he constructed the heaven he created them also. They are all parts of time, and the past and future are created species of time, which we unconsciously but wrongly transfer to the eternal essence; for we say that he “was,” he “is,” he “will be,” but the truth is that “is” alone is properly attributed to him, and that “was” and “will be” only to be spoken of becoming in time, for they are motions, but that which is immovably the same cannot become older or younger by time, nor ever did or has become, or hereafter will be, older or younger, nor is subject at all to any of those states which affect moving and sensible things and of which generation is the cause. These are the forms of time, which imitates eternity and revolves according to a law of number. Moreover, when we say that what has become is become and what becomes is becoming, and that what will become is about to become and that the non-existent is non-existent—all these are inaccurate modes of expression. But perhaps this whole subject will be more suitably discussed on some other occasion.

Time, then, and the heaven came into being at the same instant in order that, having been created together, if ever there was to be a dissolution of them, they might be dissolved together. It was framed after the pattern of the eternal nature, that it might resemble this as far as was possible; for the pattern exists from eternity, and the created heaven has been, and is, and will be, in all time. Such was the mind and thought of God in the creation of time. The sun and moon and five other stars, which are called the planets, were created by him in order to distinguish and preserve the numbers of time; and when he had made their several bodies, he placed them in the orbits in which the circle of the other was revolving—in seven orbits seven stars. First, there was the moon in the orbit nearest the earth, and next the sun, in the second orbit above the earth; then came the morning star and the star sacred to Hermes, moving in orbits which have an equal swiftness with the sun, but in an opposite direction; and this

is the reason why the sun and Hermes and Lucifer overtake and are overtaken by each other. To enumerate the places which he assigned to the other stars, and to give all the reasons why he assigned them, although a secondary matter, would give more trouble than the primary. These things at some future time, when we are at leisure, may have the consideration which they deserve, but not at present.

Now, when all the stars which were necessary to the creation of time had attained a motion suitable to them, -and had become living creatures having bodies fastened by vital chains, and learnt their appointed task, moving in the motion of the diverse, which is diagonal, and passes through and is governed by the motion of the same, they revolved, some in a larger and some in a lesser orbit - those which had the lesser orbit revolving faster, and those which had the larger more slowly. Now by reason of the motion of the same, those which revolved fastest appeared to be overtaken by those which moved slower although they really overtook them; for the motion of the same made them all turn in a spiral, and, because some went one way and some another, that which receded most slowly from the sphere of the same, which was the swiftest, appeared to follow it most nearly. That there might be some visible measure of their relative swiftness and slowness as they proceeded in their eight courses, God lighted a fire, which we now call the sun, in the second from the earth of these orbits, that it might give light to the whole of heaven, and that the animals, as many as nature intended, might participate in number, learning arithmetic from the revolution of the same and the like. Thus then, and for this reason the night and the day were created, being the period of the one most intelligent revolution. And the month is accomplished when the moon has completed her orbit and overtaken the sun, and the year when the sun has completed his own orbit. Mankind, with hardly an exception, have not remarked the periods of the other stars, and they have no name for them, and do not measure them against one another by the help of number, and hence they can scarcely be said to know that their wanderings, being infinite in number and admirable for their variety, make up time. And yet there is no difficulty in seeing that the perfect number of time fulfils the perfect year when all the eight revolutions, having their relative degrees of swiftness, are accomplished together and attain their completion at the same time, measured by the rotation of the same and equally moving. After this manner, and for these reasons, came into being such of the stars as in their heavenly progress received reversals of motion, to the end that the created heaven might imitate the eternal nature, and be as like as possible to the perfect and intelligible animal.

Thus far and until the birth of time the created universe was made in the likeness of the original, but inasmuch as all animals were not yet comprehended therein, it was still unlike. What remained, the creator then proceeded to fashion after the nature of the pattern. Now as in the ideal animal the mind perceives ideas or species of a certain nature and number, he thought that this created animal ought to have species of a like nature and number. There are four such; one of them is the heavenly race of the gods; another, the race of birds whose way is in the air; the third, the watery species; and the fourth, the pedestrian and land creatures. Of the heavenly and divine, he created the greater part out of fire, that they might be the brightest of all things and fairest to behold, and he fashioned them after the likeness of the universe in the figure of a circle, and made them follow the intelligent motion of the supreme, distributing them over the whole

circumference of heaven, which was to be a true cosmos or glorious world spangled with them all over. And he gave to each of them two movements: the first, a movement on the same spot after the same manner, whereby they ever continue to think consistently the same thoughts about the same things; the second, a forward movement, in which they are controlled by the revolution of the same and the like; but by the other five motions they were unaffected, in order that each of them might attain the highest perfection. And for this reason the fixed stars were created, to be divine and eternal animals, ever-abiding and revolving after the same manner and on the same spot; and the other stars which reverse their motion and are subject to deviations of this kind, were created in the manner already described. The earth, which is our nurse, clinging around the pole which is extended through the universe, he framed to be the guardian and artificer of night and day, first and eldest of gods that are in the interior of heaven. Vain would be the attempt to tell all the figures of them circling as in dance, and their juxtapositions, and the return of them in their revolutions upon themselves, and their approximations, and to say which of these deities in their conjunctions meet, and which of them are in opposition, and in what order they get behind and before one another, and when they are severally eclipsed to our sight and again reappear, sending terrors and intimations of the future to those who cannot calculate their movements-to attempt to tell of all this without a visible representation of the heavenly system would be labour in vain. Enough on this head; and now let what we have said about the nature of the created and visible gods have an end.

To know or tell the origin of the other divinities is beyond us, and we must accept the traditions of the men of old time who affirm themselves to be the offspring of the gods-that is what they say-and they must surely have known their own ancestors. How can we doubt the word of the children of the gods? Although they give no probable or certain proofs, still, as they declare that they are speaking of what took place in their own family, we must conform to custom and believe them. In this manner, then, according to them, the genealogy of these gods is to be received and set forth.

Oceanus and Tethys were the children of Earth and Heaven, and from these sprang Phorcys and Cronos and Rhea, and all that generation; and from Cronos and Rhea sprang Zeus and Here, and all those who are said to be their brethren, and others who were the children of these.

Now, when all of them, both those who visibly appear in their revolutions as well as those other gods who are of a more retiring nature, had come into being, the creator of the universe addressed them in these words: "Gods, children of gods, who are my works, and of whom I am the artificer and father, my creations are indissoluble, if so I will. All that is bound may be undone, but only an evil being would wish to undo that which is harmonious and happy. Wherefore, since ye are but creatures, ye are not altogether immortal and indissoluble, but ye shall certainly not be dissolved, nor be liable to the fate of death, having in my will a greater and mightier bond than those with which ye were bound at the time of your birth. And now listen to my instructions:-Three tribes of mortal beings remain to be created-without them the universe will be incomplete, for it will not contain every kind of animal which it ought to contain, if it is to be perfect. On the other hand, if they were created by me and received life at my hands,

they would be on an equality with the gods. In order then that they may be mortal, and that this universe may be truly universal, do ye, according to your natures, betake yourselves to the formation of animals, imitating the power which was shown by me in creating you. The part of them worthy of the name immortal, which is called divine and is the guiding principle of those who are willing to follow justice and you-of that divine part I will myself sow the seed, and having made a beginning, I will hand the work over to you. And do ye then interweave the mortal with the immortal, and make and beget living creatures, and give them food, and make them to grow, and receive them again in death."

Thus he spake, and once more into the cup in which he had previously mingled the soul of the universe he poured the remains of the elements, and mingled them in much the same manner; they were not, however, pure as before, but diluted to the second and third degree. And having made it he divided the whole mixture into souls equal in number to the stars, and assigned each soul to a star; and having there placed them as in a chariot, he showed them the nature of the universe, and declared to them the laws of destiny, according to which their first birth would be one and the same for all,-no one should suffer a disadvantage at his hands; they were to be sown in the instruments of time severally adapted to them, and to come forth the most religious of animals; and as human nature was of two kinds, the superior race would here after be called man. Now, when they should be implanted in bodies by necessity, and be always gaining or losing some part of their bodily substance, then in the first place it would be necessary that they should all have in them one and the same faculty of sensation, arising out of irresistible impressions; in the second place, they must have love, in which pleasure and pain mingle; also fear and anger, and the feelings which are akin or opposite to them; if they conquered these they would live righteously, and if they were conquered by them, unrighteously. He who lived well during his appointed time was to return and dwell in his native star, and there he would have a blessed and congenial existence. But if he failed in attaining this, at the second birth he would pass into a woman, and if, when in that state of being, he did not desist from evil, he would continually be changed into some brute who resembled him in the evil nature which he had acquired, and would not cease from his toils and transformations until he followed the revolution of the same and the like within him, and overcame by the help of reason the turbulent and irrational mob of later accretions, made up of fire and air and water and earth, and returned to the form of his first and better state. Having given all these laws to his creatures, that he might be guiltless of future evil in any of them, the creator sowed some of them in the earth, and some in the moon, and some in the other instruments of time; and when he had sown them he committed to the younger gods the fashioning of their mortal bodies, and desired them to furnish what was still lacking to the human soul, and having made all the suitable additions, to rule over them, and to pilot the mortal animal in the best and wisest manner which they could, and avert from him all but self-inflicted evils.

When the creator had made all these ordinances he remained in his own accustomed nature, and his children heard and were obedient to their father's word, and receiving from him the immortal principle of a mortal creature, in imitation of their own creator they borrowed portions of fire, and earth, and water, and air from the world, which were hereafter to be restored-these they took and welded them together, not with the

indissoluble chains by which they were themselves bound, but with little pegs too small to be visible, making up out of all the four elements each separate body, and fastening the courses of the immortal soul in a body which was in a state of perpetual influx and efflux. Now these courses, detained as in a vast river, neither overcame nor were overcome; but were hurrying and hurried to and fro, so that the whole animal was moved and progressed, irregularly however and irrationally and anyhow, in all the six directions of motion, wandering backwards and forwards, and right and left, and up and down, and in all the six directions. For great as was the advancing and retiring flood which provided nourishment, the affections produced by external contact caused still greater tumult-when the body of any one met and came into collision with some external fire, or with the solid earth or the gliding waters, or was caught in the tempest borne on the air, and the motions produced by any of these impulses were carried through the body to the soul. All such motions have consequently received the general name of "sensations," which they still retain. And they did in fact at that time create a very great and mighty movement; uniting with the ever flowing stream in stirring up and violently shaking the courses of the soul, they completely stopped the revolution of the same by their opposing current, and hindered it from predominating and advancing; and they so disturbed the nature of the other or diverse, that the three double intervals [i.e. between 1, 2, 4, 8], and the three triple intervals [i.e. between 1, 3, 9, 27], together with the mean terms and connecting links which are expressed by the ratios of 3 : 2, and 4 : 3, and of 9 : 8-these, although they cannot be wholly undone except by him who united them, were twisted by them in all sorts of ways, and the circles were broken and disordered in every possible manner, so that when they moved they were tumbling to pieces, and moved irrationally, at one time in a reverse direction, and then again obliquely, and then upside down, as you might imagine a person who is upside down and has his head leaning upon the ground and his feet up against something in the air; and when he is in such a position, both he and the spectator fancy that the right of either is his left, and left right. If, when powerfully experiencing these and similar effects, the revolutions of the soul come in contact with some external thing, either of the class of the same or of the other, they speak of the same or of the other in a manner the very opposite of the truth; and they become false and foolish, and there is no course or revolution in them which has a guiding or directing power; and if again any sensations enter in violently from without and drag after them the whole vessel of the soul, then the courses of the soul, though they seem to conquer, are really conquered.

And by reason of all these affections, the soul, when encased in a mortal body, now, as in the beginning, is at first without intelligence; but when the flood of growth and nutriment abates, and the courses of the soul, calming down, go their own way and become steadier as time goes on, then the several circles return to their natural form, and their revolutions are corrected, and they call the same and the other by their right names, and make the possessor of them to become a rational being. And if these combine in him with any true nurture or education, he attains the fulness and health of the perfect man, and escapes the worst disease of all; but if he neglects education he walks lame to the end of his life, and returns imperfect and good for nothing to the world below. This, however, is a later stage; at present we must treat more exactly the subject before us, which involves a preliminary enquiry into the generation of the body and its members, and as to how the soul was created-for what reason and by what providence

of the gods; and holding fast to probability, we must pursue our way.

First, then, the gods, imitating the spherical shape of the universe, enclosed the two divine courses in a spherical body, that, namely, which we now term the head, being the most divine part of us and the lord of all that is in us: to this the gods, when they put together the body, gave all the other members to be servants, considering that it partook of every sort of motion. In order then that it might not tumble about among the high and deep places of the earth, but might be able to get over the one and out of the other, they provided the body to be its vehicle and means of locomotion; which consequently had length and was furnished with four limbs extended and flexible; these God contrived to be instruments of locomotion with which it might take hold and find support, and so be able to pass through all places, carrying on high the dwelling-place of the most sacred and divine part of us. Such was the origin of legs and hands, which for this reason were attached to every man; and the gods, deeming the front part of man to be more honourable and more fit to command than the hinder part, made us to move mostly in a forward direction. Wherefore man must needs have his front part unlike and distinguished from the rest of his body.

And so in the vessel of the head, they first of all put a face in which they inserted organs to minister in all things to the providence of the soul, and they appointed this part, which has authority, to be by nature the part which is in front. And of the organs they first contrived the eyes to give light, and the principle according to which they were inserted was as follows: So much of fire as would not burn, but gave a gentle light, they formed into a substance akin to the light of every-day life; and the pure fire which is within us and related thereto they made to flow through the eyes in a stream smooth and dense, compressing the whole eye, and especially the centre part, so that it kept out everything of a coarser nature, and allowed to pass only this pure element. When the light of day surrounds the stream of vision, then like falls upon like, and they coalesce, and one body is formed by natural affinity in the line of vision, wherever the light that falls from within meets with an external object. And the whole stream of vision, being similarly affected in virtue of similarity, diffuses the motions of what it touches or what touches it over the whole body, until they reach the soul, causing that perception which we call sight. But when night comes on and the external and kindred fire departs, then the stream of vision is cut off; for going forth to an unlike element it is changed and extinguished, being no longer of one nature with the surrounding atmosphere which is now deprived of fire: and so the eye no longer sees, and we feel disposed to sleep. For when the eyelids, which the gods invented for the preservation of sight, are closed, they keep in the internal fire; and the power of the fire diffuses and equalises the inward motions; when they are equalised, there is rest, and when the rest is profound, sleep comes over us scarce disturbed by dreams; but where the greater motions still remain, of whatever nature and in whatever locality, they engender corresponding visions in dreams, which are remembered by us when we are awake and in the external world. And now there is no longer any difficulty in understanding the creation of images in mirrors and all smooth and bright surfaces. For from the communion of the internal and external fires, and again from the union of them and their numerous transformations when they meet in the mirror, all these appearances of necessity arise, when the fire from the face coalesces with the fire from the eye on the bright and smooth surface.

And right appears left and left right, because the visual rays come into contact with the rays emitted by the object in a manner contrary to the usual mode of meeting; but the right appears right, and the left left, when the position of one of the two concurring lights is reversed; and this happens when the mirror is concave and its smooth surface repels the right stream of vision to the left side, and the left to the right. Or if the mirror be turned vertically, then the concavity makes the countenance appear to be all upside down, and the lower rays are driven upwards and the upper downwards.

All these are to be reckoned among the second and co-operative causes which God, carrying into execution the idea of the best as far as possible, uses as his ministers. They are thought by most men not to be the second, but the prime causes of all things, because they freeze and heat, and contract and dilate, and the like. But they are not so, for they are incapable of reason or intellect; the only being which can properly have mind is the invisible soul, whereas fire and water, and earth and air, are all of them visible bodies. The lover of intellect and knowledge ought to explore causes of intelligent nature first of all, and, secondly, of those things which, being moved by others, are compelled to move others. And this is what we too must do. Both kinds of causes should be acknowledged by us, but a distinction should be made between those which are endowed with mind and are the workers of things fair and good, and those which are deprived of intelligence and always produce chance effects without order or design. Of the second or co-operative causes of sight, which help to give to the eyes the power which they now possess, enough has been said. I will therefore now proceed to speak of the higher use and purpose for which God has given them to us. The sight in my opinion is the source of the greatest benefit to us, for had we never seen the stars, and the sun, and the heaven, none of the words which we have spoken about the universe would ever have been uttered. But now the sight of day and night, and the months and the revolutions of the years, have created number, and have given us a conception of time, and the power of enquiring about the nature of the universe; and from this source we have derived philosophy, than which no greater good ever was or will be given by the gods to mortal man. This is the greatest boon of sight: and of the lesser benefits why should I speak? even the ordinary man if he were deprived of them would bewail his loss, but in vain. Thus much let me say however: God invented and gave us sight to the end that we might behold the courses of intelligence in the heaven, and apply them to the courses of our own intelligence which are akin to them, the unperturbed to the perturbed; and that we, learning them and partaking of the natural truth of reason, might imitate the absolutely unerring courses of God and regulate our own vagaries. The same may be affirmed of speech and hearing: they have been given by the gods to the same end and for a like reason. For this is the principal end of speech, whereto it most contributes. Moreover, so much of music as is adapted to the sound of the voice and to the sense of hearing is granted to us for the sake of harmony; and harmony, which has motions akin to the revolutions of our souls, is not regarded by the intelligent votary of the Muses as given by them with a view to irrational pleasure, which is deemed to be the purpose of it in our day, but as meant to correct any discord which may have arisen in the courses of the soul, and to be our ally in bringing her into harmony and agreement with herself; and rhythm too was given by them for the same reason, on account of the irregular and graceless ways which prevail among mankind generally, and to help us against them.

Thus far in what we have been saying, with small exception, the works of intelligence have been set forth; and now we must place by the side of them in our discourse the things which come into being through necessity-for the creation is mixed, being made up of necessity and mind. Mind, the ruling power, persuaded necessity to bring the greater part of created things to perfection, and thus and after this manner in the beginning, when the influence of reason got the better of necessity, the universe was created. But if a person will truly tell of the way in which the work was accomplished, he must include the other influence of the variable cause as well. Wherefore, we must return again and find another suitable beginning, as about the former matters, so also about these. To which end we must consider the nature of fire, and water, and air, and earth, such as they were prior to the creation of the heaven, and what was happening to them in this previous state; for no one has as yet explained the manner of their generation, but we speak of fire and the rest of them, whatever they mean, as though men knew their natures, and we maintain them to be the first principles and letters or elements of the whole, when they cannot reasonably be compared by a man of any sense even to syllables or first compounds. And let me say thus much: I will not now speak of the first principle or principles of all things, or by whatever name they are to be called, for this reason-because it is difficult to set forth my opinion according to the method of discussion which we are at present employing. Do not imagine, any more than I can bring myself to imagine, that I should be right in undertaking so great and difficult a task. Remembering what I said at first about probability, I will do my best to give as probable an explanation as any other-or rather, more probable; and I will first go back to the beginning and try to speak of each thing and of all. Once more, then, at the commencement of my discourse, I call upon God, and beg him to be our saviour out of a strange and unwonted enquiry, and to bring us to the haven of probability. So now let us begin again.

This new beginning of our discussion of the universe requires a fuller division than the former; for then we made two classes, now a third must be revealed. The two sufficed for the former discussion: one, which we assumed, was a pattern intelligible and always the same; and the second was only the imitation of the pattern, generated and visible. There is also a third kind which we did not distinguish at the time, conceiving that the two would be enough. But now the argument seems to require that we should set forth in words another kind, which is difficult of explanation and dimly seen. What nature are we to attribute to this new kind of being? We reply, that it is the receptacle, and in a manner the nurse, of all generation. I have spoken the truth; but I must express myself in clearer language, and this will be an arduous task for many reasons, and in particular because I must first raise questions concerning fire and the other elements, and determine what each of them is; for to say, with any probability or certitude, which of them should be called water rather than fire, and which should be called any of them rather than all or some one of them, is a difficult matter. How, then, shall we settle this point, and what questions about the elements may be fairly raised?

In the first place, we see that what we just now called water, by condensation, I suppose, becomes stone and earth; and this same element, when melted and dispersed, passes into vapour and air. Air, again, when inflamed, becomes fire; and

again fire, when condensed and extinguished, passes once more into the form of air; and once more, air, when collected and condensed, produces cloud and mist; and from these, when still more compressed, comes flowing water, and from water comes earth and stones once more; and thus generation appears to be transmitted from one to the other in a circle. Thus, then, as the several elements never present themselves in the same form, how can any one have the assurance to assert positively that any of them, whatever it may be, is one thing rather than another? No one can. But much the safest plan is to speak of them as follows:-Anything which we see to be continually changing, as, for example, fire, we must not call "this" or "that," but rather say that it is "of such a nature"; nor let us speak of water as "this"; but always as "such"; nor must we imply that there is any stability in any of those things which we indicate by the use of the words "this" and "that," supposing ourselves to signify something thereby; for they are too volatile to be detained in any such expressions as "this," or "that," or "relative to this," or any other mode of speaking which represents them as permanent. We ought not to apply "this" to any of them, but rather the word "such"; which expresses the similar principle circulating in each and all of them; for example, that should be called "fire" which is of such a nature always, and so of everything that has generation. That in which the elements severally grow up, and appear, and decay, is alone to be called by the name "this" or "that"; but that which is of a certain nature, hot or white, or anything which admits of opposite equalities, and all things that are compounded of them, ought not to be so denominated. Let me make another attempt to explain my meaning more clearly. Suppose a person to make all kinds of figures of gold and to be always transmuting one form into all the rest-somebody points to one of them and asks what it is. By far the safest and truest answer is, That is gold; and not to call the triangle or any other figures which are formed in the gold "these," as though they had existence, since they are in process of change while he is making the assertion; but if the questioner be willing to take the safe and indefinite expression, "such," we should be satisfied. And the same argument applies to the universal nature which receives all bodies-that must be always called the same; for, while receiving all things, she never departs at all from her own nature, and never in any way, or at any time, assumes a form like that of any of the things which enter into her; she is the natural recipient of all impressions, and is stirred and informed by them, and appears different from time to time by reason of them. But the forms which enter into and go out of her are the likenesses of real existences modelled after their patterns in wonderful and inexplicable manner, which we will hereafter investigate. For the present we have only to conceive of three natures: first, that which is in process of generation; secondly, that in which the generation takes place; and thirdly, that of which the thing generated is a resemblance. And we may liken the receiving principle to a mother, and the source or spring to a father, and the intermediate nature to a child; and may remark further, that if the model is to take every variety of form, then the matter in which the model is fashioned will not be duly prepared, unless it is formless, and free from the impress of any of these shapes which it is hereafter to receive from without. For if the matter were like any of the supervening forms, then whenever any opposite or entirely different nature was stamped upon its surface, it would take the impression badly, because it would intrude its own shape. Wherefore, that which is to receive all forms should have no form; as in making perfumes they first contrive that the liquid substance which is to receive the scent shall be as inodorous as possible; or as those who wish to impress figures on soft

substances do not allow any previous impression to remain, but begin by making the surface as even and smooth as possible. In the same way that which is to receive perpetually and through its whole extent the resemblances of all eternal beings ought to be devoid of any particular form. Wherefore, the mother and receptacle of all created and visible and in any way sensible things, is not to be termed earth, or air, or fire, or water, or any of their compounds or any of the elements from which these are derived, but is an invisible and formless being which receives all things and in some mysterious way partakes of the intelligible, and is most incomprehensible. In saying this we shall not be far wrong; as far, however, as we can attain to a knowledge of her from the previous considerations, we may truly say that fire is that part of her nature which from time to time is inflamed, and water that which is moistened, and that the mother substance becomes earth and air, in so far as she receives the impressions of them.

Let us consider this question more precisely. Is there any self-existent fire? and do all those things which we call self-existent exist? or are only those things which we see, or in some way perceive through the bodily organs, truly existent, and nothing whatever besides them? And is all that which, we call an intelligible essence nothing at all, and only a name? Here is a question which we must not leave unexamined or undetermined, nor must we affirm too confidently that there can be no decision; neither must we interpolate in our present long discourse a digression equally long, but if it is possible to set forth a great principle in a few words, that is just what we want.

Thus I state my view:-If mind and true opinion are two distinct classes, then I say that there certainly are these self-existent ideas unperceived by sense, and apprehended only by the mind; if, however, as some say, true opinion differs in no respect from mind, then everything that we perceive through the body is to be regarded as most real and certain. But we must affirm that to be distinct, for they have a distinct origin and are of a different nature; the one is implanted in us by instruction, the other by persuasion; the one is always accompanied by true reason, the other is without reason; the one cannot be overcome by persuasion, but the other can: and lastly, every man may be said to share in true opinion, but mind is the attribute of the gods and of very few men. Wherefore also we must acknowledge that there is one kind of being which is always the same, uncreated and indestructible, never receiving anything into itself from without, nor itself going out to any other, but invisible and imperceptible by any sense, and of which the contemplation is granted to intelligence only. And there is another nature of the same name with it, and like to it, perceived by sense, created, always in motion, becoming in place and again vanishing out of place, which is apprehended by opinion and sense. And there is a third nature, which is space, and is eternal, and admits not of destruction and provides a home for all created things, and is apprehended without the help of sense, by a kind of spurious reason, and is hardly real; which we beholding as in a dream, say of all existence that it must of necessity be in some place and occupy a space, but that what is neither in heaven nor in earth has no existence. Of these and other things of the same kind, relating to the true and waking reality of nature, we have only this dreamlike sense, and we are unable to cast off sleep and determine the truth about them. For an image, since the reality, after which it is modelled, does not belong to it, and it exists ever as the fleeting shadow of some other, must be inferred to be in another [i.e. in space], grasping existence in some way or other, or it could not be at all.

But true and exact reason, vindicating the nature of true being, maintains that while two things [i.e. the image and space] are different they cannot exist one of them in the other and so be one and also two at the same time.

Thus have I concisely given the result of my thoughts; and my verdict is that being and space and generation, these three, existed in their three ways before the heaven; and that the nurse of generation, moistened by water and inflamed by fire, and receiving the forms of earth and air, and experiencing all the affections which accompany these, presented a strange variety of appearances; and being full of powers which were neither similar nor equally balanced, was never in any part in a state of equipoise, but swaying unevenly hither and thither, was shaken by them, and by its motion again shook them; and the elements when moved were separated and carried continually, some one way, some another; as, when rain is shaken and winnowed by fans and other instruments used in the threshing of corn, the close and heavy particles are borne away and settle in one direction, and the loose and light particles in another. In this manner, the four kinds or elements were then shaken by the receiving vessel, which, moving like a winnowing machine, scattered far away from one another the elements most unlike, and forced the most similar elements into close contact. Wherefore also the various elements had different places before they were arranged so as to form the universe. At first, they were all without reason and measure. But when the world began to get into order, fire and water and earth and air had only certain faint traces of themselves, and were altogether such as everything might be expected to be in the absence of God; this, I say, was their nature at that time, and God fashioned them by form and number. Let it be consistently maintained by us in all that we say that God made them as far as possible the fairest and best, out of things which were not fair and good. And now I will endeavour to show you the disposition and generation of them by an unaccustomed argument, which am compelled to use; but I believe that you will be able to follow me, for your education has made you familiar with the methods of science.

In the first place, then, as is evident to all, fire and earth and water and air are bodies. And every sort of body possesses solidity, and every solid must necessarily be contained in planes; and every plane rectilinear figure is composed of triangles; and all triangles are originally of two kinds, both of which are made up of one right and two acute angles; one of them has at either end of the base the half of a divided right angle, having equal sides, while in the other the right angle is divided into unequal parts, having unequal sides. These, then, proceeding by a combination of probability with demonstration, we assume to be the original elements of fire and the other bodies; but the principles which are prior to these God only knows, and he of men who is the friend God. And next we have to determine what are the four most beautiful bodies which are unlike one another, and of which some are capable of resolution into one another; for having discovered thus much, we shall know the true origin of earth and fire and of the proportionate and intermediate elements. And then we shall not be willing to allow that there are any distinct kinds of visible bodies fairer than these. Wherefore we must endeavour to construct the four forms of bodies which excel in beauty, and then we shall be able to say that we have sufficiently apprehended their nature. Now of the two triangles, the isosceles has one form only; the scalene or unequal-sided has an infinite number. Of the infinite forms we must select the most beautiful, if we are to proceed in

due order, and any one who can point out a more beautiful form than ours for the construction of these bodies, shall carry off the palm, not as an enemy, but as a friend. Now, the one which we maintain to be the most beautiful of all the many triangles (and we need not speak of the others) is that of which the double forms a third triangle which is equilateral; the reason of this would be long to tell; he who disproves what we are saying, and shows that we are mistaken, may claim a friendly victory. Then let us choose two triangles, out of which fire and the other elements have been constructed, one isosceles, the other having the square of the longer side equal to three times the square of the lesser side.

Now is the time to explain what was before obscurely said: there was an error in imagining that all the four elements might be generated by and into one another; this, I say, was an erroneous supposition, for there are generated from the triangles which we have selected four kinds—three from the one which has the sides unequal; the fourth alone is framed out of the isosceles triangle. Hence they cannot all be resolved into one another, a great number of small bodies being combined into a few large ones, or the converse. But three of them can be thus resolved and compounded, for they all spring from one, and when the greater bodies are broken up, many small bodies will spring up out of them and take their own proper figures; or, again, when many small bodies are dissolved into their triangles, if they become one, they will form one large mass of another kind. So much for their passage into one another. I have now to speak of their several kinds, and show out of what combinations of numbers each of them was formed. The first will be the simplest and smallest construction, and its element is that triangle which has its hypotenuse twice the lesser side. When two such triangles are joined at the diagonal, and this is repeated three times, and the triangles rest their diagonals and shorter sides on the same point as a centre, a single equilateral triangle is formed out of six triangles; and four equilateral triangles, if put together, make out of every three plane angles one solid angle, being that which is nearest to the most obtuse of plane angles; and out of the combination of these four angles arises the first solid form which distributes into equal and similar parts the whole circle in which it is inscribed. The second species of solid is formed out of the same triangles, which unite as eight equilateral triangles and form one solid angle out of four plane angles, and out of six such angles the second body is completed. And the third body is made up of 120 triangular elements, forming twelve solid angles, each of them included in five plane equilateral triangles, having altogether twenty bases, each of which is an equilateral triangle. The one element [that is, the triangle which has its hypotenuse twice the lesser side] having generated these figures, generated no more; but the isosceles triangle produced the fourth elementary figure, which is compounded of four such triangles, joining their right angles in a centre, and forming one equilateral quadrangle. Six of these united form eight solid angles, each of which is made by the combination of three plane right angles; the figure of the body thus composed is a cube, having six plane quadrangular equilateral bases. There was yet a fifth combination which God used in the delineation of the universe.

Now, he who, duly reflecting on all this, enquires whether the worlds are to be regarded as indefinite or definite in number, will be of opinion that the notion of their indefiniteness is characteristic of a sadly indefinite and ignorant mind. He, however, who

raises the question whether they are to be truly regarded as one or five, takes up a more reasonable position. Arguing from probabilities, I am of opinion that they are one; another, regarding the question from another point of view, will be of another mind. But, leaving this enquiry, let us proceed to distribute the elementary forms, which have now been created in idea, among the four elements.

To earth, then, let us assign the cubical form; for earth is the most immoveable of the four and the most plastic of all bodies, and that which has the most stable bases must of necessity be of such a nature. Now, of the triangles which we assumed at first, that which has two equal sides is by nature more firmly based than that which has unequal sides; and of the compound figures which are formed out of either, the plane equilateral quadrangle has necessarily, a more stable basis than the equilateral triangle, both in the whole and in the parts. Wherefore, in assigning this figure to earth, we adhere to probability; and to water we assign that one of the remaining forms which is the least moveable; and the most moveable of them to fire; and to air that which is intermediate. Also we assign the smallest body to fire, and the greatest to water, and the intermediate in size to air; and, again, the acutest body to fire, and the next in acuteness to, air, and the third to water. Of all these elements, that which has the fewest bases must necessarily be the most moveable, for it must be the acutest and most penetrating in every way, and also the lightest as being composed of the smallest number of similar particles: and the second body has similar properties in a second degree, and the third body in the third degree. Let it be agreed, then, both according to strict reason and according to probability, that the pyramid is the solid which is the original element and seed of fire; and let us assign the element which was next in the order of generation to air, and the third to water. We must imagine all these to be so small that no single particle of any of the four kinds is seen by us on account of their smallness: but when many of them are collected together their aggregates are seen. And the ratios of their numbers, motions, and other properties, everywhere God, as far as necessity allowed or gave consent, has exactly perfected, and harmonised in due proportion.

From all that we have just been saying about the elements or kinds, the most probable conclusion is as follows:-earth, when meeting with fire and dissolved by its sharpness, whether the dissolution take place in the fire itself or perhaps in some mass of air or water, is borne hither and thither, until its parts, meeting together and mutually harmonising, again become earth; for they can never take any other form. But water, when divided by fire or by air, on reforming, may become one part fire and two parts air; and a single volume of air divided becomes two of fire. Again, when a small body of fire is contained in a larger body of air or water or earth, and both are moving, and the fire struggling is overcome and broken up, then two volumes of fire form one volume of air; and when air is overcome and cut up into small pieces, two and a half parts of air are condensed into one part of water. Let us consider the matter in another way. When one of the other elements is fastened upon by fire, and is cut by the sharpness of its angles and sides, it coalesces with the fire, and then ceases to be cut by them any longer. For no element which is one and the same with itself can be changed by or change another of the same kind and in the same state. But so long as in the process of transition the weaker is fighting against the stronger, the dissolution continues. Again, when a few small particles, enclosed in many larger ones, are in process of decomposition and

extinction, they only cease from their tendency to extinction when they consent to pass into the conquering nature, and fire becomes air and air water. But if bodies of another kind go and attack them [i.e. the small particles], the latter continue to be dissolved until, being completely forced back and dispersed, they make their escape to their own kindred, or else, being overcome and assimilated to the conquering power, they remain where they are and dwell with their victors, and from being many become one. And owing to these affections, all things are changing their place, for by the motion of the receiving vessel the bulk of each class is distributed into its proper place; but those things which become unlike themselves and like other things, are hurried by the shaking into the place of the things to which they grow like.

Now all unmixed and primary bodies are produced by such causes as these. As to the subordinate species which are included in the greater kinds, they are to be attributed to the varieties in the structure of the two original triangles. For either structure did not originally produce the triangle of one size only, but some larger and some smaller, and there are as many sizes as there are species of the four elements. Hence when they are mingled with themselves and with one another there is an endless variety of them, which those who would arrive at the probable truth of nature ought duly to consider.

Unless a person comes to an understanding about the nature and conditions of rest and motion, he will meet with many difficulties in the discussion which follows. Something has been said of this matter already, and something more remains to be said, which is, that motion never exists in what is uniform. For to conceive that anything can be moved without a mover is hard or indeed impossible, and equally impossible to conceive that there can be a mover unless there be something which can be moved-motion cannot exist where either of these are wanting, and for these to be uniform is impossible; wherefore we must assign rest to uniformity and motion to the want of uniformity. Now inequality is the cause of the nature which is wanting in uniformity; and of this we have already described the origin. But there still remains the further point-why things when divided after their kinds do not cease to pass through one another and to change their place-which we will now proceed to explain. In the revolution of the universe are comprehended all the four elements, and this being circular and having a tendency to come together, compresses everything and will not allow any place to be left void. Wherefore, also, fire above all things penetrates everywhere, and air next, as being next in rarity of the elements; and the two other elements in like manner penetrate according to their degrees of rarity. For those things which are composed of the largest particles have the largest void left in their compositions, and those which are composed of the smallest particles have the least. And the contraction caused by the compression thrusts the smaller particles into the interstices of the larger. And thus, when the small parts are placed side by side with the larger, and the lesser divide the greater and the greater unite the lesser, all the elements are borne up and down and hither and thither towards their own places; for the change in the size of each changes its position in space. And these causes generate an inequality which is always maintained, and is continually creating a perpetual motion of the elements in all time.

In the next place we have to consider that there are divers kinds of fire. There are, for example, first, flame; and secondly, those emanations of flame which do not burn but

only give light to the eyes; thirdly, the remains of fire, which are seen in red-hot embers after the flame has been extinguished. There are similar differences in the air; of which the brightest part is called the aether, and the most turbid sort mist and darkness; and there are various other nameless kinds which arise from the inequality of the triangles. Water, again, admits in the first place of a division into two kinds; the one liquid and the other fusile. The liquid kind is composed of the small and unequal particles of water; and moves itself and is moved by other bodies owing to the want of uniformity and the shape of its particles; whereas the fusile kind, being formed of large and uniform particles, is more stable than the other, and is heavy and compact by reason of its uniformity. But when fire gets in and dissolves the particles and destroys the uniformity, it has greater mobility, and becoming fluid is thrust forth by the neighbouring air and spreads upon the earth; and this dissolution of the solid masses is called melting, and their spreading out upon the earth flowing. Again, when the fire goes out of the fusile substance, it does not pass into vacuum, but into the neighbouring air; and the air which is displaced forces together the liquid and still moveable mass into the place which was occupied by the fire, and unites it with itself. Thus compressed the mass resumes its equability, and is again at unity with itself, because the fire which was the author of the inequality has retreated; and this departure of the fire is called cooling, and the coming together which follows upon it is termed congealment. Of all the kinds termed fusile, that which is the densest and is formed out of the finest and most uniform parts is that most precious possession called gold, which is hardened by filtration through rock; this is unique in kind, and has both a glittering and a yellow colour. A shoot of gold, which is so dense as to be very hard, and takes a black colour, is termed adamant. There is also another kind which has parts nearly like gold, and of which there are several species; it is denser than gold, and it contains a small and fine portion of earth, and is therefore harder, yet also lighter because of the great interstices which it has within itself; and this substance, which is one of the bright and denser kinds of water, when solidified is called copper. There is an alloy of earth mingled with it, which, when the two parts grow old and are disunited, shows itself separately and is called rust. The remaining phenomena of the same kind there will be no difficulty in reasoning out by the method of probabilities. A man may sometimes set aside meditations about eternal things, and for recreation turn to consider the truths of generation which are probable only; he will thus gain a pleasure not to be repented of, and secure for himself while he lives a wise and moderate pastime. Let us grant ourselves this indulgence, and go through the probabilities relating to the same subjects which follow next in order.

Water which is mingled with fire, so much as is fine and liquid (being so called by reason of its motion and the way in which it rolls along the ground), and soft, because its bases give way are less stable than those of earth, when separated from fire and air and isolated, becomes more uniform, and by their retirement is compressed into itself; and if the condensation be very great, the water above the earth becomes hail, but on the earth, ice; and that which is congealed in a less degree and is only half solid, when above the earth is called snow, and when upon the earth, and condensed from dew, hoarfrost. Then, again, there are the numerous kinds of water which have been mingled with one another, and are distilled through plants which grow in the earth; and this whole class is called by the name of juices or saps. The unequal admixture of these fluids creates a variety of species; most of them are nameless, but four which are of a

fiery nature are clearly distinguished and have names. First there is wine, which warms the soul as well as the body: secondly, there is the oily nature, which is smooth and divides the visual ray, and for this reason is bright and shining and of a glistening appearance, including pitch, the juice of the castor berry, oil itself, and other things of a like kind: thirdly, there is the class of substances which expand the contracted parts of the mouth, until they return to their natural state, and by reason of this property create sweetness;-these are included under the general name of honey: and, lastly, there is a frothy nature, which differs from all juices, having a burning quality which dissolves the flesh; it is called opos (a vegetable acid).

As to the kinds of earth, that which is filtered through water passes into stone in the following manner:-The water which mixes with the earth and is broken up in the process changes into air, and taking this form mounts into its own place. But as there is no surrounding vacuum it thrusts away the neighbouring air, and this being rendered heavy, and, when it is displaced, having been poured around the mass of earth, forcibly compresses it and drives it into the vacant space whence the new air had come up; and the earth when compressed by the air into an indissoluble union with water becomes rock. The fairer sort is that which is made up of equal and similar parts and is transparent; that which has the opposite qualities is inferior. But when all the watery part is suddenly drawn out by fire, a more brittle substance is formed, to which we give the name of pottery. Sometimes also moisture may remain, and the earth which has been fused by fire becomes, when cool, a certain stone of a black colour. A like separation of the water which had been copiously mingled with them may occur in two substances composed of finer particles of earth and of a briny nature; out of either of them a half solid body is then formed, soluble in water-the one, soda, which is used for purging away oil and earth, and other, salt, which harmonizes so well in combinations pleasing to the palate, and is, as the law testifies, a substance dear to the gods. The compounds of earth and water are not soluble by water, but by fire only, and for this reason:-Neither fire nor air melt masses of earth; for their particles, being smaller than the interstices in its structure, have plenty of room to move without forcing their way, and so they leave the earth unmelted and undissolved; but particles of water, which are larger, force a passage, and dissolve and melt the earth. Wherefore earth when not consolidated by force is dissolved by water only; when consolidated, by nothing but fire; for this is the only body which can find an entrance. The cohesion of water again, when very strong, is dissolved by fire only-when weaker, then either by air or fire-the former entering the interstices, and the latter penetrating even the triangles. But nothing can dissolve air, when strongly condensed, which does not reach the elements or triangles; or if not strongly condensed, then only fire can dissolve it. As to bodies composed of earth and water, while the water occupies the vacant interstices of the earth in them which are compressed by force, the particles of water which approach them from without, finding no entrance, flow around the entire mass and leave it undissolved; but the particles of fire, entering into the interstices of the water, do to the water what water does to earth and fire to air, and are the sole causes of the compound body of earth and water liquefying and becoming fluid. Now these bodies are of two kinds; some of them, such as glass and the fusible sort of stones, have less water than they have earth; on the other hand, substances of the nature of wax and incense have more of water entering into their composition.

I have thus shown the various classes of bodies as they are diversified by their forms and combinations and changes into one another, and now I must endeavour to set forth their affections and the causes of them. In the first place, the bodies which I have been describing are necessarily objects of sense. But we have not yet considered the origin of flesh, or what belongs to flesh, or of that part of the soul which is mortal. And these things cannot be adequately explained without also explaining the affections which are concerned with sensation, nor the latter without the former: and yet to explain them together is hardly possible; for which reason we must assume first one or the other and afterwards examine the nature of our hypothesis. In order, then, that the affections may follow regularly after the elements, let us presuppose the existence of body and soul.

First, let us enquire what we mean by saying that fire is hot; and about this we may reason from the dividing or cutting power which it exercises on our bodies. We all of us feel that fire is sharp; and we may further consider the fineness of the sides, and the sharpness of the angles, and the smallness of the particles, and the swiftness of the motion—all this makes the action of fire violent and sharp, so that it cuts whatever it meets. And we must not forget that the original figure of fire [i.e. the pyramid], more than any other form, has a dividing power which cuts our bodies into small pieces (Kepmatizei), and thus naturally produces that affection which we call heat; and hence the origin of the name (thepmos, Kepma). Now, the opposite of this is sufficiently manifest; nevertheless we will not fail to describe it. For the larger particles of moisture which surround the body, entering in and driving out the lesser, but not being able to take their places, compress the moist principle in us; and this from being unequal and disturbed, is forced by them into a state of rest, which is due to equability and compression. But things which are contracted contrary to nature are by nature at war, and force themselves apart; and to this war and convulsion the name of shivering and trembling is given; and the whole affection and the cause of the affection are both termed cold. That is called hard to which our flesh yields, and soft which yields to our flesh; and things are also termed hard and soft relatively to one another. That which yields has a small base; but that which rests on quadrangular bases is firmly posed and belongs to the class which offers the greatest resistance; so too does that which is the most compact and therefore most repellent. The nature of the light and the heavy will be best understood when examined in connexion with our notions of above and below; for it is quite a mistake to suppose that the universe is parted into two regions, separate from and opposite to each other, the one a lower to which all things tend which have any bulk, and an upper to which things only ascend against their will. For as the universe is in the form of a sphere, all the extremities, being equidistant from the centre, are equally extremities, and the centre, which is equidistant from them, is equally to be regarded as the opposite of them all. Such being the nature of the world, when a person says that any of these points is above or below, may he not be justly charged with using an improper expression? For the centre of the world cannot be rightly called either above or below, but is the centre and nothing else; and the circumference is not the centre, and has in no one part of itself a different relation to the centre from what it has in any of the opposite parts. Indeed, when it is in every direction similar, how can one rightly give to it names which imply opposition? For if there were any solid body in equipoise at the centre of the universe, there would be nothing to draw it to this extreme

rather than to that, for they are all perfectly similar; and if a person were to go round the world in a circle, he would often, when standing at the antipodes of his former position, speak of the same point as above and below; for, as I was saying just now, to speak of the whole which is in the form of a globe as having one part above and another below is not like a sensible man.

The reason why these names are used, and the circumstances under which they are ordinarily applied by us to the division of the heavens, may be elucidated by the following supposition:-if a person were to stand in that part of the universe which is the appointed place of fire, and where there is the great mass of fire to which fiery bodies gather-if, I say, he were to ascend thither, and, having the power to do this, were to abstract particles of fire and put them in scales and weigh them, and then, raising the balance, were to draw the fire by force towards the uncongenial element of the air, it would be very evident that he could compel the smaller mass more readily than the larger; for when two things are simultaneously raised by one and the same power, the smaller body must necessarily yield to the superior power with less reluctance than the larger; and the larger body is called heavy and said to tend downwards, and the smaller body is called light and said to tend upwards. And we may detect ourselves who are upon the earth doing precisely the same thing. For we of separate earthy natures, and sometimes earth itself, and draw them into the uncongenial element of air by force and contrary to nature, both clinging to their kindred elements. But that which is smaller yields to the impulse given by us towards the dissimilar element more easily than the larger; and so we call the former light, and the place towards which it is impelled we call above, and the contrary state and place we call heavy and below respectively. Now the relations of these must necessarily vary, because the principal masses of the different elements hold opposite positions; for that which is light, heavy, below or above in one place will be found to be and become contrary and transverse and every way diverse in relation to that which is light, heavy, below or above in an opposite place. And about all of them this has to be considered:-that the tendency of each towards its kindred element makes the body which is moved heavy, and the place towards which the motion tends below, but things which have an opposite tendency we call by an opposite name. Such are the causes which we assign to these phenomena. As to the smooth and the rough, any one who sees them can explain the reason of them to another. For roughness is hardness mingled with irregularity, and smoothness is produced by the joint effect of uniformity and density.

The most important of the affections which concern the whole body remains to be considered-that is, the cause of pleasure and pain in the perceptions of which I have been speaking, and in all other things which are perceived by sense through the parts of the body, and have both pains and pleasures attendant on them. Let us imagine the causes of every affection, whether of sense or not, to be of the following nature, remembering that we have already distinguished between the nature which is easy and which is hard to move; for this is the direction in which we must hunt the prey which we mean to take. A body which is of a nature to be easily moved, on receiving an impression however slight, spreads abroad the motion in a circle, the parts communicating with each other, until at last, reaching the principle of mind, they announce the quality of the agent. But a body of the opposite kind, being immobile, and

not extending to the surrounding region, merely receives the impression, and does not stir any of the neighbouring parts; and since the parts do not distribute the original impression to other parts, it has no effect of motion on the whole animal, and therefore produces no effect on the patient. This is true of the bones and hair and other more earthy parts of the human body; whereas what was said above relates mainly to sight and hearing, because they have in them the greatest amount of fire and air. Now we must conceive of pleasure and pain in this way. An impression produced in us contrary to nature and violent, if sudden, is painful; and, again, the sudden return to nature is pleasant; but a gentle and gradual return is imperceptible and vice versa. On the other hand the impression of sense which is most easily produced is most readily felt, but is not accompanied by Pleasure or pain; such, for example, are the affections of the sight, which, as we said above, is a body naturally uniting with our body in the day-time; for cuttings and burnings and other affections which happen to the sight do not give pain, nor is there pleasure when the sight returns to its natural state; but the sensations are dearest and strongest according to the manner in which the eye is affected by the object, and itself strikes and touches it; there is no violence either in the contraction or dilation of the eye. But bodies formed of larger particles yield to the agent only with a struggle; and then they impart their motions to the whole and cause pleasure and pain-pain when alienated from their natural conditions, and pleasure when restored to them. Things which experience gradual withdrawals and emptyings of their nature, and great and sudden replenishments, fail to perceive the emptying, but are sensible of the replenishment; and so they occasion no pain, but the greatest pleasure, to the mortal part of the soul, as is manifest in the case of perfumes. But things which are changed all of a sudden, and only gradually and with difficulty return to their own nature, have effects in every way opposite to the former, as is evident in the case of burnings and cuttings of the body.

Thus have we discussed the general affections of the whole body, and the names of the agents which produce them. And now I will endeavour to speak of the affections of particular parts, and the causes and agents of them, as far as I am able. In the first place let us set forth what was omitted when we were speaking of juices, concerning the affections peculiar to the tongue. These too, like most of the other affections, appear to be caused by certain contractions and dilations, but they have besides more of roughness and smoothness than is found in other affections; for whenever earthy particles enter into the small veins which are the testing of the tongue, reaching to the heart, and fall upon the moist, delicate portions of flesh-when, as they are dissolved, they contract and dry up the little veins, they are astringent if they are rougher, but if not so rough, then only harsh. Those of them which are of an abstergent nature, and purge the whole surface of the tongue, if they do it in excess, and so encroach as to consume some part of the flesh itself, like potash and soda, are all termed bitter. But the particles which are deficient in the alkaline quality, and which cleanse only moderately, are called salt, and having no bitterness or roughness, are regarded as rather agreeable than otherwise. Bodies which share in and are made smooth by the heat of the mouth, and which are inflamed, and again in turn inflame that which heats them, and which are so light that they are carried upwards to the sensations of the head, and cut all that comes in their way, by reason of these qualities in them, are all termed pungent. But when these same particles, refined by putrefaction, enter into the narrow veins, and are duly

proportioned to the particles of earth and air which are there, they set them whirling about one another, and while they are in a whirl cause them to dash against and enter into one another, and so form hollows surrounding the particles that enter-which watery vessels of air (for a film of moisture, sometimes earthy, sometimes pure, is spread around the air) are hollow spheres of water; and those of them which are pure, are transparent, and are called bubbles, while those composed of the earthy liquid, which is in a state of general agitation and effervescence, are said to boil or ferment-of all these affections the cause is termed acid. And there is the opposite affection arising from an opposite cause, when the mass of entering particles, immersed in the moisture of the mouth, is congenial to the tongue, and smooths and oils over the roughness, and relaxes the parts which are unnaturally contracted, and contracts the parts which are relaxed, and disposes them all according to their nature-that sort of remedy of violent affections is pleasant and agreeable to every man, and has the name sweet. But enough of this.

The faculty of smell does not admit of differences of kind; for all smells are of a half formed nature, and no element is so proportioned as to have any smell. The veins about the nose are too narrow to admit earth and water, and too wide to detain fire and air; and for this reason no one ever perceives the smell of any of them; but smells always proceed from bodies that are damp, or putrefying, or liquefying, or evaporating, and are perceptible only in the intermediate state, when water is changing into air and air into water; and all of them are either vapor or mist. That which is passing out of air into water is mist, and that which is passing from water into air is vapour; and hence all smells are thinner than water and thicker than air. The proof of this is, that when there is any obstruction to the respiration, and a man draws in his breath by force, then no smell filters through, but the air without the smell alone penetrates. Wherefore the varieties of smell have no name, and they have not many, or definite and simple kinds; but they are distinguished only painful and pleasant, the one sort irritating and disturbing the whole cavity which is situated between the head and the navel, the other having a soothing influence, and restoring this same region to an agreeable and natural condition.

In considering the third kind of sense, hearing, we must speak of the causes in which it originates. We may in general assume sound to be a blow which passes through the ears, and is transmitted by means of the air, the brain, and the blood, to the soul, and that hearing is the vibration of this blow, which begins in the head and ends in the region of the liver. The sound which moves swiftly is acute, and the sound which moves slowly is grave, and that which is regular is equable and smooth, and the reverse is harsh. A great body of sound is loud, and a small body of sound the reverse. Respecting the harmonies of sound I must hereafter speak.

There is a fourth class of sensible things, having many intricate varieties, which must now be distinguished. They are called by the general name of colours, and are a flame which emanates from every sort of body, and has particles corresponding to the sense of sight. I have spoken already, in what has preceded, of the causes which generate sight, and in this place it will be natural and suitable to give a rational theory of colours.

Of the particles coming from other bodies which fall upon the sight, some are smaller

and some are larger, and some are equal to the parts of the sight itself. Those which are equal are imperceptible, and we call them transparent. The larger produce contraction, the smaller dilation, in the sight, exercising a power akin to that of hot and cold bodies on the flesh, or of astringent bodies on the tongue, or of those heating bodies which we termed pungent. White and black are similar effects of contraction and dilation in another sphere, and for this reason have a different appearance. Wherefore, we ought to term white that which dilates the visual ray, and the opposite of this is black. There is also a swifter motion of a different sort of fire which strikes and dilates the ray of sight until it reaches the eyes, forcing a way through their passages and melting them, and eliciting from them a union of fire and water which we call tears, being itself an opposite fire which comes to them from an opposite direction-the inner fire flashes forth like lightning, and the outer finds a way in and is extinguished in the moisture, and all sorts of colours are generated by the mixture. This affection is termed dazzling, and the object which produces it is called bright and flashing. There is another sort of fire which is intermediate, and which reaches and mingles with the moisture of the eye without flashing; and in this, the fire mingling with the ray of the moisture, produces a colour like blood, to which we give the name of red. A bright hue mingled with red and white gives the colour called auburn. The law of proportion, however, according to which the several colours are formed, even if a man knew he would be foolish in telling, for he could not give any necessary reason, nor indeed any tolerable or probable explanation of them. Again, red, when mingled with black and white, becomes purple, but it becomes umber when the colours are burnt as well as mingled and the black is more thoroughly mixed with them. Flame colour is produced by a union of auburn and dun, and dun by an admixture of black and white; pale yellow, by an admixture of white and auburn. White and bright meeting, and falling upon a full black, become dark blue, and when dark blue mingles with white, a light blue colour is formed, as flame-colour with black makes leek green. There will be no difficulty in seeing how and by what mixtures the colours derived from these are made according to the rules of probability. He, however, who should attempt to verify all this by experiment, would forget the difference of the human and divine nature. For God only has the knowledge and also the power which are able to combine many things into one and again resolve the one into many. But no man either is or ever will be able to accomplish either the one or the other operation.

These are the elements, thus of necessity then subsisting, which the creator of the fairest and best of created things associated with himself, when he made the self-sufficing and most perfect God, using the necessary causes as his ministers in the accomplishment of his work, but himself contriving the good in all his creations. Wherefore we may distinguish two sorts of causes, the one divine and the other necessary, and may seek for the divine in all things, as far as our nature admits, with a view to the blessed life; but the necessary kind only for the sake of the divine, considering that without them and when isolated from them, these higher things for which we look cannot be apprehended or received or in any way shared by us.

Seeing, then, that we have now prepared for our use the various classes of causes which are the material out of which the remainder of our discourse must be woven, just as wood is the material of the carpenter, let us revert in a few words to the point at

which we began, and then endeavour to add on a suitable ending to the beginning of our tale.

As I said at first, when all things were in disorder God created in each thing in relation to itself, and in all things in relation to each other, all the measures and harmonies which they could possibly receive. For in those days nothing had any proportion except by accident; nor did any of the things which now have names deserve to be named at all-as, for example, fire, water, and the rest of the elements. All these the creator first set in order, and out of them he constructed the universe, which was a single animal comprehending in itself all other animals, mortal and immortal. Now of the divine, he himself was the creator, but the creation of the mortal he committed to his offspring. And they, imitating him, received from him the immortal principle of the soul; and around this they proceeded to fashion a mortal body, and made it to be the vehicle of the so and constructed within the body a soul of another nature which was mortal, subject to terrible and irresistible affections-first of all, pleasure, the greatest incitement to evil; then, pain, which deters from good; also rashness and fear, two foolish counsellors, anger hard to be appeased, and hope easily led astray-these they mingled with irrational sense and with all-daring love according to necessary laws, and so framed man. Wherefore, fearing to pollute the divine any more than was absolutely unavoidable, they gave to the mortal nature a separate habitation in another part of the body, placing the neck between them to be the isthmus and boundary, which they constructed between the head and breast, to keep them apart. And in the breast, and in what is termed the thorax, they encased the mortal soul; and as the one part of this was superior and the other inferior they divided the cavity of the thorax into two parts, as the women's and men's apartments are divided in houses, and placed the midriff to be a wall of partition between them. That part of the inferior soul which is endowed with courage and passion and loves contention they settled nearer the head, midway between the midriff and the neck, in order that it might be under the rule of reason and might join with it in controlling and restraining the desires when they are no longer willing of their own accord to obey the word of command issuing from the citadel.

The heart, the knot of the veins and the fountain of the blood which races through all the limbs was set in the place of guard, that when the might of passion was roused by reason making proclamation of any wrong assailing them from without or being perpetrated by the desires within, quickly the whole power of feeling in the body, perceiving these commands and threats, might obey and follow through every turn and alley, and thus allow the principle of the best to have the command in all of them. But the gods, foreknowing that the palpitation of the heart in the expectation of danger and the swelling and excitement of passion was caused by fire, formed and implanted as a supporter to the heart the lung, which was, in the first place, soft and bloodless, and also had within hollows like the pores of a sponge, in order that by receiving the breath and the drink, it might give coolness and the power of respiration and alleviate the heat. Wherefore they cut the air-channels leading to the lung, and placed the lung about the heart as a soft spring, that, when passion was rife within, the heart, beating against a yielding body, might be cooled and suffer less, and might thus become more ready to join with passion in the service of reason.

The part of the soul which desires meats and drinks and the other things of which it has need by reason of the bodily nature, they placed between the midriff and the boundary of the navel, contriving in all this region a sort of manger for the food of the body; and there they bound it down like a wild animal which was chained up with man, and must be nourished if man was to exist. They appointed this lower creation his place here in order that he might be always feeding at the manger, and have his dwelling as far as might be from the council-chamber, making as little noise and disturbance as possible, and permitting the best part to advise quietly for the good of the whole. And knowing that this lower principle in man would not comprehend reason, and even if attaining to some degree of perception would never naturally care for rational notions, but that it would be led away by phantoms and visions night and day-to be a remedy for this, God combined with it the liver, and placed it in the house of the lower nature, contriving that it should be solid and smooth, and bright and sweet, and should also have a bitter quality, in order that the power of thought, which proceeds from the mind, might be reflected as in a mirror which receives likenesses of objects and gives back images of them to the sight; and so might strike terror into the desires, when, making use of the bitter part of the liver, to which it is akin, it comes threatening and invading, and diffusing this bitter element swiftly through the whole liver produces colours like bile, and contracting every part makes it wrinkled and rough; and twisting out of its right place and contorting the lobe and closing and shutting up the vessels and gates, causes pain and loathing. And the converse happens when some gentle inspiration of the understanding pictures images of an opposite character, and allays the bile and bitterness by refusing to stir or touch the nature opposed to itself, but by making use of the natural sweetness of the liver, corrects all things and makes them to be right and smooth and free, and renders the portion of the soul which resides about the liver happy and joyful, enabling it to pass the night in peace, and to practise divination in sleep, inasmuch as it has no share in mind and reason. For the authors of our being, remembering the command of their father when he bade them create the human race as good as they could, that they might correct our inferior parts and make them to attain a measure of truth, placed in the liver the seat of divination. And herein is a proof that God has given the art of divination not to the wisdom, but to the foolishness of man. No man, when in his wits, attains prophetic truth and inspiration; but when he receives the inspired word, either his intelligence is enthralled in sleep, or he is demented by some distemper or possession. And he who would understand what he remembers to have been said, whether in a dream or when he was awake, by the prophetic and inspired nature, or would determine by reason the meaning of the apparitions which he has seen, and what indications they afford to this man or that, of past, present or future good and evil, must first recover his wits. But, while he continues demented, he cannot judge of the visions which he sees or the words which he utters; the ancient saying is very true, that "only a man who has his wits can act or judge about himself and his own affairs." And for this reason it is customary to appoint interpreters to be judges of the true inspiration. Some persons call them prophets; they are quite unaware that they are only the expositors of dark sayings and visions, and are not to be called prophets at all, but only interpreters of prophecy.

Such is the nature of the liver, which is placed as we have described in order that it may give prophetic intimations. During the life of each individual these intimations are

plainer, but after his death the liver becomes blind, and delivers oracles too obscure to be intelligible. The neighbouring organ [the spleen] is situated on the left-hand side, and is constructed with a view of keeping the liver bright and pure-like a napkin, always ready prepared and at hand to clean the mirror. And hence, when any impurities arise in the region of the liver by reason of disorders of the body, the loose nature of the spleen, which is composed of a hollow and bloodless tissue, receives them all and dears them away, and when filled with the unclean matter, swells and festers, but, again, when the body is purged, settles down into the same place as before, and is humbled.

Concerning the soul, as to which part is mortal and which divine, and how and why they are separated, and where located, if God acknowledges that we have spoken the truth, then, and then only, can we be confident; still, we may venture to assert that what has been said by us is probable, and will be rendered more probable by investigation. Let us assume thus much.

The creation of the rest of follows next in order, and this we may investigate in a similar manner. And it appears to be very meet that the body should be framed on the following principles:-

The authors of our race were aware that we should be intemperate in eating and drinking, and take a good deal more than was necessary or proper, by reason of gluttony. In order then that disease might not quickly destroy us, and lest our mortal race should perish without fulfilling its end-intending to provide against this, the gods made what is called the lower belly, to be a receptacle for the superfluous meat and drink, and formed the convolution of the bowels, so that the food might be prevented from passing quickly through and compelling the body to require more food, thus producing insatiable gluttony, and making the whole race an enemy to philosophy and music, and rebellious against the divinest element within us.

The bones and flesh, and other similar parts of us, were made as follows. The first principle of all of them was the generation of the marrow. For the bonds of life which unite the soul with the body are made fast there, and they are the root and foundation of the human race. The marrow itself is created out of other materials: God took such of the primary triangles as were straight and smooth, and were adapted by their perfection to produce fire and water, and air and earth-these, I say, he separated from their kinds, and mingling them in due proportions with one another, made the marrow out of them to be a universal seed of the whole race of mankind; and in this seed he then planted and enclosed the souls, and in the original distribution gave to the marrow as many and various forms as the different kinds of souls were hereafter to receive. That which, like a field, was to receive the divine seed, he made round every way, and called that portion of the marrow, brain, intending that, when an animal was perfected, the vessel containing this substance should be the head; but that which was intended to contain the remaining and mortal part of the soul he distributed into figures at once around and elongated, and he called them all by the name "marrow"; and to these, as to anchors, fastening the bonds of the whole soul, he proceeded to fashion around them the entire framework of our body, constructing for the marrow, first of all a complete covering of bone.

Bone was composed by him in the following manner. Having sifted pure and smooth earth he kneaded it and wetted it with marrow, and after that he put it into fire and then into water, and once more into fire and again into water-in this way by frequent transfers from one to the other he made it insoluble by either. Out of this he fashioned, as in a lathe, a globe made of bone, which he placed around the brain, and in this he left a narrow opening; and around the marrow of the neck and back he formed vertebrae which he placed under one another like pivots, beginning at the head and extending through the whole of the trunk. Thus wishing to preserve the entire seed, he enclosed it in a stone-like casing, inserting joints, and using in the formation of them the power of the other or diverse as an intermediate nature, that they might have motion and flexure. Then again, considering that the bone would be too brittle and inflexible, and when heated and again cooled would soon mortify and destroy the seed within-having this in view, he contrived the sinews and the flesh, that so binding all the members together by the sinews, which admitted of being stretched and relaxed about the vertebrae, he might thus make the body capable of flexion and extension, while the flesh would serve as a protection against the summer heat and against the winter cold, and also against falls, softly and easily yielding to external bodies, like articles made of felt; and containing in itself a warm moisture which in summer exudes and makes the surface damp, would impart a nature coolness to the whole body; and again in winter by the help of this internal warmth would form a very tolerable defence against the frost which surrounds it and attacks it from without. He who modelled us, considering these things, mixed earth with fire and water and blended them; and making a ferment of acid and salt, he mingled it with them and formed soft and succulent flesh. As for the sinews, he made them of a mixture of bone and unfermented flesh, attempered so as to be in a mean, and gave them a yellow colour; wherefore the sinews have a firmer and more glutinous nature than flesh, but a softer and moister nature than the bones. With these God covered the bones and marrow, binding them together by sinews, and then enshrouded them all in an upper covering of flesh. The more living and sensitive of the bones he enclosed in the thinnest film of flesh, and those which had the least life within them in the thickest and most solid flesh. So again on the joints of the bones, where reason indicated that no more was required, he placed only a thin covering of flesh, that it might not interfere with the flexion of our bodies and make them unwieldy because difficult to move; and also that it might not, by being crowded and pressed and matted together, destroy sensation by reason of its hardness, and impair the memory and dull the edge of intelligence. Wherefore also the thighs and the shanks and the hips, and the bones of the arms and the forearms, and other parts which have no joints, and the inner bones, which on account of the rarity of the soul in the marrow are destitute of reason-all these are abundantly provided with flesh; but such as have mind in them are in general less fleshy, except where the creator has made some part solely of flesh in order to give sensation-as, for example, the tongue. But commonly this is not the case. For the nature which comes into being and grows up in us by a law of necessity, does not admit of the combination of solid bone and much flesh with acute perceptions. More than any other part the framework of the head would have had them, if they could have co-existed, and the human race, having a strong and fleshy and sinewy head, would have had a life twice or many times as long as it now has, and also more healthy and free from pain.

But our creators, considering whether they should make a longer-lived race which was worse, or a shorter-lived race which was better, came to the conclusion that every one ought to prefer a shorter span of life, which was better, to a longer one, which was worse; and therefore they covered the head with thin bone, but not with flesh and sinews, since it had no joints; and thus the head was added, having more wisdom and sensation than the rest of the body, but also being in every man far weaker. For these reasons and after this manner God placed the sinews at the extremity of the head, in a circle round the neck, and glued them together by the principle of likeness and fastened the extremities of the jawbones to them below the face, and the other sinews he dispersed throughout the body, fastening limb to limb. The framers of us framed the mouth, as now arranged, having teeth and tongue and lips, with a view to the necessary and the good, contriving the way in for necessary purposes, the way out for the best purposes; for that is necessary which enters in and gives food to the body; but the river of speech, which flows out of a man and ministers to the intelligence, is the fairest and noblest of all streams. Still the head could neither be left a bare frame of bones, on account of the extremes of heat and cold in the different seasons, nor yet be allowed to be wholly covered, and so become dull and senseless by reason of an overgrowth of flesh. The fleshy nature was not therefore wholly dried up, but a large sort of peel was parted off and remained over, which is now called the skin. This met and grew by the help of the cerebral moisture, and became the circular envelopment of the head. And the moisture, rising up under the sutures, watered and closed in the skin upon the crown, forming a sort of knot. The diversity of the sutures was caused by the power of the courses of the soul and of the food, and the more these struggled against one another the more numerous they became, and fewer if the struggle were less violent. This skin the divine power pierced all round with fire, and out of the punctures which were thus made the moisture issued forth, and the liquid and heat which was pure came away, and a mixed part which was composed of the same material as the skin, and had a fineness equal to the punctures, was borne up by its own impulse and extended far outside the head, but being too slow to escape, was thrust back by the external air, and rolled up underneath the skin, where it took root. Thus the hair sprang up in the skin, being akin to it because it is like threads of leather, but rendered harder and closer through the pressure of the cold, by which each hair, while in process of separation from the skin, is compressed and cooled. Wherefore the creator formed the head hairy, making use of the causes which I have mentioned, and reflecting also that instead of flesh the brain needed the hair to be a light covering or guard, which would give shade in summer and shelter in winter, and at the same time would not impede our quickness of perception. From the combination of sinew, skin, and bone, in the structure of the finger, there arises a triple compound, which, when dried up, takes the form of one hard skin partaking of all three natures, and was fabricated by these second causes, but designed by mind which is the principal cause with an eye to the future. For our creators well knew that women and other animals would some day be framed out of men, and they further knew that many animals would require the use of nails for many purposes; wherefore they fashioned in men at their first creation the rudiments of nails. For this purpose and for these reasons they caused skin, hair, and nails to grow at the extremities of the limbs. And now that all the parts and members of the mortal animal had come together, since its life of necessity consisted of fire and breath, and it

therefore wasted away by dissolution and depletion, the gods contrived the following remedy: They mingled a nature akin to that of man with other forms and perceptions, and thus created another kind of animal. These are the trees and plants and seeds which have been improved by cultivation and are now domesticated among us; anciently there were only the wild kinds, which are older than the cultivated. For everything that partakes of life may be truly called a living being, and the animal of which we are now speaking partakes of the third kind of soul, which is said to be seated between the midriff and the navel, having no part in opinion or reason or mind, but only in feelings of pleasure and pain and the desires which accompany them. For this nature is always in a passive state, revolving in and about itself, repelling the motion from without and using its own, and accordingly is not endowed by nature with the power of observing or reflecting on its own concerns. Wherefore it lives and does not differ from a living being, but is fixed and rooted in the same spot, having no power of self-motion.

Now after the superior powers had created all these natures to be food for us who are of the inferior nature, they cut various channels through the body as through a garden, that it might be watered as from a running stream. In the first place, they cut two hidden channels or veins down the back where the skin and the flesh join, which answered severally to the right and left side of the body. These they let down along the backbone, so as to have the marrow of generation between them, where it was most likely to flourish, and in order that the stream coming down from above might flow freely to the other parts, and equalise the irrigation. In the next place, they divided the veins about the head, and interlacing them, they sent them in opposite directions; those coming from the right side they sent to the left of the body, and those from the left they diverted towards the right, so that they and the skin might together form a bond which should fasten the head to the body, since the crown of the head was not encircled by sinews; and also in order that the sensations from both sides might be distributed over the whole body. And next, they ordered the water-courses of the body in a manner which I will describe, and which will be more easily understood if we begin by admitting that all things which have lesser parts retain the greater, but the greater cannot retain the lesser. Now of all natures fire has the smallest parts, and therefore penetrates through earth and water and air and their compounds, nor can anything hold it. And a similar principle applies to the human belly; for when meats and drinks enter it, it holds them, but it cannot hold air and fire, because the particles of which they consist are smaller than its own structure.

These elements, therefore, God employed for the sake of distributing moisture from the belly into the veins, weaving together network of fire and air like a wheel, having at the entrance two lesser wheels; further he constructed one of these with two openings, and from the lesser wheels he extended cords reaching all round to the extremities of the network. All the interior of the net he made of fire, but the lesser wheels and their cavity, of air. The network he took and spread over the newly-formed animal in the following manner:-He let the lesser wheels pass into the mouth; there were two of them, and one he let down by the air-pipes into the lungs, the other by the side of the air-pipes into the belly. The former he divided into two branches, both of which he made to meet at the channels of the nose, so that when the way through the mouth did not act, the streams of the mouth as well were replenished through the nose. With the other cavity (i.e. of the

greater wheel) he enveloped the hollow parts of the body, and at one time he made all this to flow into the lesser wheels, quite gently, for they are composed of air, and at another time he caused the lesser wheels to flow back again; and the net he made to find a way in and out through the pores of the body, and the rays of fire which are bound fast within followed the passage of the air either way, never at any time ceasing so long as the mortal being holds together. This process, as we affirm, the name-giver named inspiration and expiration. And all this movement, active as well as passive, takes place in order that the body, being watered and cooled, may receive nourishment and life; for when the respiration is going in and out, and the fire, which is fast bound within, follows it, and ever and anon moving to and fro, enters through the belly and reaches the meat and drink, it dissolves them, and dividing them into small portions and guiding them through the passages where it goes, pumps them as from a fountain into the channels of the veins, and makes the stream of the veins flow through the body as through a conduit.

Let us once more consider the phenomena of respiration, and enquire into the causes which have made it what it is. They are as follows:-Seeing that there is no such thing as a vacuum into which any of those things which are moved can enter, and the breath is carried from us into the external air, the next point is, as will be dear to every one, that it does not go into a vacant space, but pushes its neighbour out of its place, and that which is thrust out in turn drives out its neighbour; and in this everything of necessity at last comes round to that place from whence the breath came forth, and enters in there, and following the breath, fills up the vacant space; and this goes on like the rotation of a wheel, because there can be no such thing as a vacuum. Wherefore also the breast and the lungs, when they emit the breath, are replenished by the air which surrounds the body and which enters in through the pores of the flesh and is driven round in a circle; and again, the air which is sent away and passes out through the body forces the breath inwards through the passage of the mouth and the nostrils. Now the origin of this movement may be supposed to be as follows. In the interior of every animal the hottest part is that which is around the blood and veins; it is in a manner an internal fountain of fire, which we compare to the network of a creel, being woven all of fire and extended through the centre of the body, while the outer parts are composed of air. Now we must admit that heat naturally proceeds outward to its own place and to its kindred element; and as there are two exits for the heat, the out through the body, and the other through the mouth and nostrils, when it moves towards the one, it drives round the air at the other, and that which is driven round falls into the fire and becomes warm, and that which goes forth is cooled. But when the heat changes its place, and the particles at the other exit grow warmer, the hotter air inclining in that direction and carried towards its native element, fire, pushes round the air at the other; and this being affected in the same way and communicating the same impulse, a circular motion swaying to and from is produced by the double process, which we call inspiration and expiration.

The phenomena of medical cupping-glasses and of the swallowing of drink and of the projection of bodies, whether discharged in the air or bowled along the ground, are to be investigated on a similar principle; and swift and slow sounds, which appear to be high and low, and are sometimes discordant on account of their inequality, and then again harmonical on account of the equality of the motion which they excite in us. For when

the motions of the antecedent swifter sounds begin to pause and the two are equalised, the slower sounds overtake the swifter and then propel them. When they overtake them they do not intrude a new and discordant motion, but introduce the beginnings of a slower, which answers to the swifter as it dies away, thus producing a single mixed expression out of high and low, whence arises a pleasure which even the unwise feel, and which to the wise becomes a higher sort of delight, being an imitation of divine harmony in mortal motions. Moreover, as to the flowing of water, the fall of the thunderbolt, and the marvels that are observed about the attraction of amber and the Heracleian stones,-in none of these cases is there any attraction; but he who investigates rightly, will find that such wonderful phenomena are attributable to the combination of certain conditions-the non-existence of a vacuum, the fact that objects push one another round, and that they change places, passing severally into their proper positions as they are divided or combined

Such as we have seen, is the nature and such are the causes of respiration-the subject in which this discussion originated. For the fire cuts the food and following the breath surges up within, fire and breath rising together and filling the veins by drawing up out of the belly and pouring into them the cut portions of the food; and so the streams of food are kept flowing through the whole body in all animals. And fresh cuttings from kindred substances, whether the fruits of the earth or herb of the field, which God planted to be our daily food, acquire all sorts of colours by their inter-mixture; but red is the most pervading of them, being created by the cutting action of fire and by the impression which it makes on a moist substance; and hence the liquid which circulates in the body has a colour such as we have described. The liquid itself we call blood, which nourishes the flesh and the whole body, whence all parts are watered and empty places filled.

Now the process of repletion and evacuation is effected after the manner of the universal motion by which all kindred substances are drawn towards one another. For the external elements which surround us are always causing us to consume away, and distributing and sending off like to like; the particles of blood, too, which are divided and contained within the frame of the animal as in a sort of heaven, are compelled to imitate the motion of the universe. Each, therefore, of the divided parts within us, being carried to its kindred nature, replenishes the void. When more is taken away than flows in, then we decay, and when less, we grow and increase.

The frame of the entire creature when young has the triangles of each kind new, and may be compared to the keel of a vessel which is just off the stocks; they are locked firmly together and yet the whole mass is soft and delicate, being freshly formed of marrow and nurtured on milk. Now when the triangles out of which meats and drinks are composed come in from without, and are comprehended in the body, being older and weaker than the triangles already there, the frame of the body gets the better of them and its newer triangles cut them up, and so the animal grows great, being nourished by a multitude of similar particles. But when the roots of the triangles are loosened by having undergone many conflicts with many things in the course of time, they are no longer able to cut or assimilate the food which enters, but are themselves easily divided by the bodies which come in from without. In this way every animal is overcome and decays, and this affection is called old age. And at last, when the bonds by which the

triangles of the marrow are united no longer hold, and are parted by the strain of existence, they in turn loosen the bonds of the soul, and she, obtaining a natural release, flies away with joy. For that which takes place according to nature is pleasant, but that which is contrary to nature is painful. And thus death, if caused by disease or produced by wounds, is painful and violent; but that sort of death which comes with old age and fulfils the debt of nature is the easiest of deaths, and is accompanied with pleasure rather than with pain.

Now every one can see whence diseases arise. There are four natures out of which the body is compacted, earth and fire and water and air, and the unnatural excess or defect of these, or the change of any of them from its own natural place into another, or-since there are more kinds than one of fire and of the other elements-the assumption by any of these of a wrong kind, or any similar irregularity, produces disorders and diseases; for when any of them is produced or changed in a manner contrary to nature, the parts which were previously cool grow warm, and those which were dry become moist, and the light become heavy, and the heavy light; all sorts of changes occur. For, as we affirm, a thing can only remain the same with itself, whole and sound, when the same is added to it, or subtracted from it, in the same respect and in the same manner and in due proportion; and whatever comes or goes away in violation of these laws causes all manner of changes and infinite diseases and corruptions. Now there is a second class of structures which are also natural, and this affords a second opportunity of observing diseases to him who would understand them. For whereas marrow and bone and flesh and sinews are composed of the four elements, and the blood, though after another manner, is likewise formed out of them, most diseases originate in the way which I have described; but the worst of all owe their severity to the fact that the generation of these substances stances in a wrong order; they are then destroyed. For the natural order is that the flesh and sinews should be made of blood, the sinews out of the fibres to which they are akin, and the flesh out of the dots which are formed when the fibres are separated. And the glutinous and rich matter which comes away from the sinews and the flesh, not only glues the flesh to the bones, but nourishes and imparts growth to the bone which surrounds the marrow; and by reason of the solidity of the bones, that which filters through consists of the purest and smoothest and oiliest sort of triangles, dropping like dew from the bones and watering the marrow.

Now when each process takes place in this order, health commonly results; when in the opposite order, disease. For when the flesh becomes decomposed and sends back the wasting substance into the veins, then an over-supply of blood of diverse kinds, mingling with air in the veins, having variegated colours and bitter properties, as well as acid and saline qualities, contains all sorts of bile and serum and phlegm. For all things go the wrong way, and having become corrupted, first they taint the blood itself, and then ceasing to give nourishment the body they are carried along the veins in all directions, no longer preserving the order of their natural courses, but at war with themselves, because they receive no good from one another, and are hostile to the abiding constitution of the body, which they corrupt and dissolve. The oldest part of the flesh which is corrupted, being hard to decompose, from long burning grows black, and from being everywhere corroded becomes bitter, and is injurious to every part of the body which is still uncorrupted. Sometimes, when the bitter element is refined away, the

black part assumes an acidity which takes the place of the bitterness; at other times the bitterness being tinged with blood has a redder colour; and this, when mixed with black, takes the hue of grass; and again, an auburn colour mingles with the bitter matter when new flesh is decomposed by the fire which surrounds the internal flame-to all which symptoms some physician perhaps, or rather some philosopher, who had the power of seeing in many dissimilar things one nature deserving of a name, has assigned the common name of bile. But the other kinds of bile are variously distinguished by their colours. As for serum, that sort which is the watery part of blood is innocent, but that which is a secretion of black and acid bile is malignant when mingled by the power of heat with any salt substance, and is then called acid phlegm. Again, the substance which is formed by the liquefaction of new and tender flesh when air is present, if inflated and encased in liquid so as to form bubbles, which separately are invisible owing to their small size, but when collected are of a bulk which is visible, and have a white colour arising out of the generation of foam-all this decomposition of tender flesh when inter-mingled with air is termed by us white phlegm. And the whey or sediment of newly-formed phlegm is sweat and tears, and includes the various daily discharges by which the body is purified. Now all these become causes of disease when the blood is not replenished in a natural manner by food and drink but gains bulk from opposite sources in violation of the laws of nature. When the several parts of the flesh are separated by disease, if the foundation remains, the power of the disorder is only half as great, and there is still a prospect of an easy recovery; but when that which binds the flesh to the bones is diseased, and no longer being separated from the muscles and sinews, ceases to give nourishment to the bone and to unite flesh and bone, and from being oily and smooth and glutinous becomes rough and salt and dry, owing to bad regimen, then all the substance thus corrupted crumbles away under the flesh and the sinews, and separates from the bone, and the fleshy parts fall away from their foundation and leave the sinews bare and full of brine, and the flesh again gets into the circulation of the blood and makes the previously-mentioned disorders still greater. And if these bodily affections be severe, still worse are the prior disorders; as when the bone itself, by reason of the density of the flesh, does not obtain sufficient air, but becomes mouldy and hot and gangrened and receives no nutriment, and the natural process is inverted, and the bone crumbling passes into the food, and the food into the flesh, and the flesh again falling into the blood makes all maladies that may occur more virulent than those already mentioned. But the worst case of all is when the marrow is diseased, either from excess or defect; and this is the cause of the very greatest and most fatal disorders, in which the whole course of the body is reversed.

There is a third class of diseases which may be conceived of as arising in three ways; for they are produced sometimes by wind, and sometimes by phlegm, and sometimes by bile. When the lung, which is the dispenser of the air to the body, is obstructed by rheums and its passages are not free, some of them not acting, while through others too much air enters, then the parts which are unrefreshed by air corrode, while in other parts the excess of air forcing its way through the veins distorts them and decomposing the body is enclosed in the midst of it and occupies the midriff thus numberless painful diseases are produced, accompanied by copious sweats. And oftentimes when the flesh is dissolved in the body, wind, generated within and unable to escape, is the source of quite as much pain as the air coming in from without; but the greatest pain is

felt when the wind gets about the sinews and the veins of the shoulders, and swells them up, so twists back the great tendons and the sinews which are connected with them. These disorders are called tetanus and opisthotonus, by reason of the tension which accompanies them. The cure of them is difficult; relief is in most cases given by fever supervening. The white phlegm, though dangerous when detained within by reason of the air-bubbles, yet if it can communicate with the outside air, is less severe, and only discolours the body, generating leprous eruptions and similar diseases. When it is mingled with black bile and dispersed about the courses of the head, which are the divinest part of us, the attack if coming on in sleep, is not so severe; but when assailing those who are awake it is hard to be got rid of, and being an affection of a sacred part, is most justly called sacred. An acid and salt phlegm, again, is the source of all those diseases which take the form of catarrh, but they have many names because the places into which they flow are manifold.

Inflammations of the body come from burnings and inflamings, and all of them originate in bile. When bile finds a means of discharge, it boils up and sends forth all sorts of tumours; but when imprisoned within, it generates many inflammatory diseases, above all when mingled with pure blood; since it then displaces the fibres which are scattered about in the blood and are designed to maintain the balance of rare and dense, in order that the blood may not be so liquefied by heat as to exude from the pores of the body, nor again become too dense and thus find a difficulty in circulating through the veins. The fibres are so constituted as to maintain this balance; and if any one brings them all together when the blood is dead and in process of cooling, then the blood which remains becomes fluid, but if they are left alone, they soon congeal by reason of the surrounding cold. The fibres having this power over the blood, bile, which is only stale blood, and which from being flesh is dissolved again into blood, at the first influx coming in little by little, hot and liquid, is congealed by the power of the fibres; and so congealing and made to cool, it produces internal cold and shuddering. When it enters with more of a flood and overcomes the fibres by its heat, and boiling up throws them into disorder, if it have power enough to maintain its supremacy, it penetrates the marrow and burns up what may be termed the cables of the soul, and sets her free; but when there is not so much of it, and the body though wasted still holds out, the bile is itself mastered, and is either utterly banished, or is thrust through the veins into the lower or upper-belly, and is driven out of the body like an exile from a state in which there has been civil war; whence arise diarrhoeas and dysenteries, and all such disorders. When the constitution is disordered by excess of fire, continuous heat and fever are the result; when excess of air is the cause, then the fever is quotidian; when of water, which is a more sluggish element than either fire or air, then the fever is a tertian; when of earth, which is the most sluggish of the four, and is only purged away in a four-fold period, the result is a quartan fever, which can with difficulty be shaken off.

Such is the manner in which diseases of the body arise; the disorders of the soul, which depend upon the body, originate as follows. We must acknowledge disease of the mind to be a want of intelligence; and of this there are two kinds; to wit, madness and ignorance. In whatever state a man experiences either of them, that state may be called disease; and excessive pains and pleasures are justly to be regarded as the greatest diseases to which the soul is liable. For a man who is in great joy or in great pain, in his

unseasonable eagerness to attain the one and to avoid the other, is not able to see or to hear anything rightly; but he is mad, and is at the time utterly incapable of any participation in reason. He who has the seed about the spinal marrow too plentiful and overflowing, like a tree overladen with fruit, has many throes, and also obtains many pleasures in his desires and their offspring, and is for the most part of his life deranged, because his pleasures and pains are so very great; his soul is rendered foolish and disordered by his body; yet he is regarded not as one diseased, but as one who is voluntarily bad, which is a mistake. The truth is that the intemperance of love is a disease of the soul due chiefly to the moisture and fluidity which is produced in one of the elements by the loose consistency of the bones. And in general, all that which is termed the incontinence of pleasure and is deemed a reproach under the idea that the wicked voluntarily do wrong is not justly a matter for reproach. For no man is voluntarily bad; but the bad become bad by reason of an ill disposition of the body and bad education, things which are hateful to every man and happen to him against his will. And in the case of pain too in like manner the soul suffers much evil from the body. For where the acid and briny phlegm and other bitter and bilious humours wander about in the body, and find no exit or escape, but are pent up within and mingle their own vapours with the motions of the soul, and are blended, with them, they produce all sorts of diseases, more or fewer, and in every degree of intensity; and being carried to the three places of the soul, whichever they may severally assail, they create infinite varieties of ill-temper and melancholy, of rashness and cowardice, and also of forgetfulness and stupidity. Further, when to this evil constitution of body evil forms of government are added and evil discourses are uttered in private as well as in public, and no sort of instruction is given in youth to cure these evils, then all of us who are bad become bad from two causes which are entirely beyond our control. In such cases the planters are to blame rather than the plants, the educators rather than the educated. But however that may be, we should endeavour as far as we can by education, and studies, and learning, to avoid vice and attain virtue; this, however, is part of another subject.

There is a corresponding enquiry concerning the mode of treatment by which the mind and the body are to be preserved, about which it is meet and right that I should say a word in turn; for it is more our duty to speak of the good than of the evil. Everything that is good is fair, and the animal fair is not without proportion, and the animal which is to be fair must have due proportion. Now we perceive lesser symmetries or proportions and reason about them, but of the highest and greatest we take no heed; for there is no proportion or disproportion more productive of health and disease, and virtue and vice, than that between soul and body. This however we do not perceive, nor do we reflect that when a weak or small frame is the vehicle of a great and mighty soul, or conversely, when a little soul is encased in a large body, then the whole animal is not fair, for it lacks the most important of all symmetries; but the due proportion of mind and body is the fairest and loveliest of all sights to him who has the seeing eye. Just as a body which has a leg too long, or which is unsymmetrical in some other respect, is an unpleasant sight, and also, when doing its share of work, is much distressed and makes convulsive efforts, and often stumbles through awkwardness, and is the cause of infinite evil to its own self-in like manner we should conceive of the double nature which we call the living being; and when in this compound there is an impassioned soul more powerful than the body, that soul, I say, convulses and fills with disorders the whole inner nature

of man; and when eager in the pursuit of some sort of learning or study, causes wasting; or again, when teaching or disputing in private or in public, and strifes and controversies arise, inflames and dissolves the composite frame of man and introduces rheums; and the nature of this phenomenon is not understood by most professors of medicine, who ascribe it to the opposite of the real cause. And once more, when body large and too strong for the soul is united to a small and weak intelligence, then inasmuch as there are two desires natural to man,-one of food for the sake of the body, and one of wisdom for the sake of the diviner part of us-then, I say, the motions of the stronger, getting the better and increasing their own power, but making the soul dull, and stupid, and forgetful, engender ignorance, which is the greatest of diseases. There is one protection against both kinds of disproportion:-that we should not move the body without the soul or the soul without the body, and thus they will be on their guard against each other, and be healthy and well balanced. And therefore the mathematician or any one else whose thoughts are much absorbed in some intellectual pursuit, must allow his body also to have due exercise, and practise gymnastic; and he who is careful to fashion the body, should in turn impart to the soul its proper motions, and should cultivate music and all philosophy, if he would deserve to be called truly fair and truly good. And the separate parts should be treated in the same manner, in imitation of the pattern of the universe; for as the body is heated and also cooled within by the elements which enter into it, and is again dried up and moistened by external things, and experiences these and the like affections from both kinds of motions, the result is that the body if given up to motion when in a state of quiescence is overmastered and perishes; but if any one, in imitation of that which we call the foster-mother and nurse of the universe, will not allow the body ever to be inactive, but is always producing motions and agitations through its whole extent, which form the natural defence against other motions both internal and external, and by moderate exercise reduces to order according to their affinities the particles and affections which are wandering about the body, as we have already said when speaking of the universe, he will not allow enemy placed by the side of enemy to stir up wars and disorders in the body, but he will place friend by the side of friend, so as to create health.

Now of all motions that is the best which is produced in a thing by itself, for it is most akin to the motion of thought and of the universe; but that motion which is caused by others is not so good, and worst of all is that which moves the body, when at rest, in parts only and by some external agency. Wherefore of all modes of purifying and reuniting the body the best is gymnastic; the next best is a surging motion, as in sailing or any other mode of conveyance which is not fatiguing; the third sort of motion may be of use in a case of extreme necessity, but in any other will be adopted by no man of sense: I mean the purgative treatment of physicians; for diseases unless they are very dangerous should not be irritated by medicines, since every form of disease is in a manner akin to the living being, whose complex frame has an appointed term of life. For not the whole race only, but each individual-barring inevitable accidents-comes into the world having a fixed span, and the triangles in us are originally framed with power to last for a certain time, beyond which no man prolong his life. And this holds also of the constitution of diseases; if any one regardless of the appointed time tries to subdue them by medicine, he only aggravates and multiplies them. Wherefore we ought always to manage them by regimen, as far as a man can spare the time, and not provoke a

disagreeable enemy by medicines.

Enough of the composite animal, and of the body which is a part of him, and of the manner in which a man may train and be trained by himself so as to live most according to reason: and we must above and before all provide that the element which is to train him shall be the fairest and best adapted to that purpose. A minute discussion of this subject would be a serious task; but if, as before, I am to give only an outline, the subject may not unfitly be summed up as follows.

I have often remarked that there are three kinds of soul located within us, having each of them motions, and I must now repeat in the fewest words possible, that one part, if remaining inactive and ceasing from its natural motion, must necessarily become very weak, but that which is trained and exercised, very strong. Wherefore we should take care that the movements of the different parts of the soul should be in due proportion.

And we should consider that God gave the sovereign part of the human soul to be the divinity of each one, being that part which, as we say, dwells at the top of the body, inasmuch as we are a plant not of an earthly but of a heavenly growth, raises us from earth to our kindred who are in heaven. And in this we say truly; for the divine power suspended the head and root of us from that place where the generation of the soul first began, and thus made the whole body upright. When a man is always occupied with the cravings of desire and ambition, and is eagerly striving to satisfy them, all his thoughts must be mortal, and, as far as it is possible altogether to become such, he must be mortal every whit, because he has cherished his mortal part. But he who has been earnest in the love of knowledge and of true wisdom, and has exercised his intellect more than any other part of him, must have thoughts immortal and divine, if he attain truth, and in so far as human nature is capable of sharing in immortality, he must altogether be immortal; and since he is ever cherishing the divine power, and has the divinity within him in perfect order, he will be perfectly happy. Now there is only one way of taking care of things, and this is to give to each the food and motion which are natural to it. And the motions which are naturally akin to the divine principle within us are the thoughts and revolutions of the universe. These each man should follow, and correct the courses of the head which were corrupted at our birth, and by learning the harmonies and revolutions of the universe, should assimilate the thinking being to the thought, renewing his original nature, and having assimilated them should attain to that perfect life which the gods have set before mankind, both for the present and the future.

Thus our original design of discoursing about the universe down to the creation of man is nearly completed. A brief mention may be made of the generation of other animals, so far as the subject admits of brevity; in this manner our argument will best attain a due proportion. On the subject of animals, then, the following remarks may be offered. Of the men who came into the world, those who were cowards or led unrighteous lives may with reason be supposed to have changed into the nature of women in the second generation. And this was the reason why at that time the gods created in us the desire of sexual intercourse, contriving in man one animated substance, and in woman another, which they formed respectively in the following manner. The outlet for drink by which liquids pass through the lung under the kidneys and into the bladder, which

receives then by the pressure of the air emits them, was so fashioned by them as to penetrate also into the body of the marrow, which passes from the head along the neck and through the back, and which in the preceding discourse we have named the seed. And the seed having life, and becoming endowed with respiration, produces in that part in which it respire a lively desire of emission, and thus creates in us the love of procreation. Wherefore also in men the organ of generation becoming rebellious and masterful, like an animal disobedient to reason, and maddened with the sting of lust, seeks to gain absolute sway; and the same is the case with the so-called womb or matrix of women; the animal within them is desirous of procreating children, and when remaining unfruitful long beyond its proper time, gets discontented and angry, and wandering in every direction through the body, closes up the passages of the breath, and, by obstructing respiration, drives them to extremity, causing all varieties of disease, until at length the desire and love of the man and the woman, bringing them together and as it were plucking the fruit from the tree, sow in the womb, as in a field, animals unseen by reason of their smallness and without form; these again are separated and matured within; they are then finally brought out into the light, and thus the generation of animals is completed.

Thus were created women and the female sex in general. But the race of birds was created out of innocent light-minded men, who, although their minds were directed toward heaven, imagined, in their simplicity, that the clearest demonstration of the things above was to be obtained by sight; these were remodelled and transformed into birds, and they grew feathers instead of hair. The race of wild pedestrian animals, again, came from those who had no philosophy in any of their thoughts, and never considered at all about the nature of the heavens, because they had ceased to use the courses of the head, but followed the guidance of those parts of the soul which are in the breast. In consequence of these habits of theirs they had their front-legs and their heads resting upon the earth to which they were drawn by natural affinity; and the crowns of their heads were elongated and of all sorts of shapes, into which the courses of the soul were crushed by reason of disuse. And this was the reason why they were created quadrupeds and polypods: God gave the more senseless of them the more support that they might be more attracted to the earth. And the most foolish of them, who trail their bodies entirely upon the ground and have no longer any need of feet, he made without feet to crawl upon the earth. The fourth class were the inhabitants of the water: these were made out of the most entirely senseless and ignorant of all, whom the transformers did not think any longer worthy of pure respiration, because they possessed a soul which was made impure by all sorts of transgression; and instead of the subtle and pure medium of air, they gave them the deep and muddy sea to be their element of respiration; and hence arose the race of fishes and oysters, and other aquatic animals, which have received the most remote habitations as a punishment of their outlandish ignorance. These are the laws by which animals pass into one another, now, as ever, changing as they lose or gain wisdom and folly.

We may now say that our discourse about the nature of the universe has an end. The world has received animals, mortal and immortal, and is fulfilled with them, and has become a visible animal containing the visible-the sensible God who is the image of the intellectual, the greatest, best, fairest, most perfect-the one only begotten heaven.

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The Seventh Letter

The Seventh Letter
by Plato
Written circa 360 B.C.
translated by Benjamin Jowett

PLATO TO THE RELATIVES AND FRIENDS OF DION. WELFARE.

You write to me that I must consider your views the same as those of Dion, and you urge me to aid your cause so far as I can in word and deed. My answer is that, if you have the same opinion and desire as he had, I consent to aid your cause; but if not, I shall think more than once about it. Now what his purpose and desire was, I can inform you from no mere conjecture but from positive knowledge. For when I made my first visit to Sicily, being then about forty years old, Dion was of the same age as Hipparinos is now, and the opinion which he then formed was that which he always retained, I mean the belief that the Syracusans ought to be free and governed by the best laws. So it is no matter for surprise if some God should make Hipparinos adopt the same opinion as Dion about forms of government. But it is well worth while that you should all, old as well as young, hear the way in which this opinion was formed, and I will attempt to give you an account of it from the beginning. For the present is a suitable opportunity.

In my youth I went through the same experience as many other men. I fancied that if, early in life, I became my own master, I should at once embark on a political career.

And I found myself confronted with the following occurrences in the public affairs of my own city. The existing constitution being generally condemned, a revolution took place, and fifty-one men came to the front as rulers of the revolutionary government, namely eleven in the city and ten in the Peiraeus-each of these bodies being in charge of the market and municipal matters-while thirty were appointed rulers with full powers over public affairs as a whole. Some of these were relatives and acquaintances of mine, and they at once invited me to share in their doings, as something to which I had a claim. The effect on me was not surprising in the case of a young man. I considered that they would, of course, so manage the State as to bring men out of a bad way of life into a good one. So I watched them very closely to see what they would do.

And seeing, as I did, that in quite a short time they made the former government seem by comparison something precious as gold-for among other things they tried to send a friend of mine, the aged Socrates, whom I should scarcely scruple to describe as the most upright man of that day, with some other persons to carry off one of the citizens by force to execution, in order that, whether he wished it, or not, he might share the guilt of their conduct; but he would not obey them, risking all consequences in preference to becoming a partner in their iniquitous deeds-seeing all these things and others of the same kind on a considerable scale, I disapproved of their proceedings, and withdrew from any connection with the abuses of the time.

Not long after that a revolution terminated the power of the thirty and the form of government as it then was. And once more, though with more hesitation, I began to be moved by the desire to take part in public and political affairs. Well, even in the new government, unsettled as it was, events occurred which one would naturally view with disapproval; and it was not surprising that in a period of revolution excessive penalties were inflicted by some persons on political opponents, though those who had returned from exile at that time showed very considerable forbearance. But once more it happened that some of those in power brought my friend Socrates, whom I have mentioned, to trial before a court of law, laying a most iniquitous charge against him and one most inappropriate in his case: for it was on a charge of impiety that some of them prosecuted and others condemned and executed the very man who would not participate in the iniquitous arrest of one of the friends of the party then in exile, at the time when they themselves were in exile and misfortune.

As I observed these incidents and the men engaged in public affairs, the laws too and the customs, the more closely I examined them and the farther I advanced in life, the more difficult it seemed to me to handle public affairs aright. For it was not possible to be active in politics without friends and trustworthy supporters; and to find these ready to my hand was not an easy matter, since public affairs at Athens were not carried on in accordance with the manners and practices of our fathers; nor was there any ready method by which I could make new friends. The laws too, written and unwritten, were being altered for the worse, and the evil was growing with startling rapidity. The result was that, though at first I had been full of a strong impulse towards political life, as I looked at the course of affairs and saw them being swept in all directions by contending currents, my head finally began to swim; and, though I did not stop looking to see if there was any likelihood of improvement in these symptoms and in the general course

of public life, I postponed action till a suitable opportunity should arise. Finally, it became clear to me, with regard to all existing communities, that they were one and all misgoverned. For their laws have got into a state that is almost incurable, except by some extraordinary reform with good luck to support it. And I was forced to say, when praising true philosophy that it is by this that men are enabled to see what justice in public and private life really is. Therefore, I said, there will be no cessation of evils for the sons of men, till either those who are pursuing a right and true philosophy receive sovereign power in the States, or those in power in the States by some dispensation of providence become true philosophers.

With these thoughts in my mind I came to Italy and Sicily on my first visit. My first impressions on arrival were those of strong disapproval-disapproval of the kind of life which was there called the life of happiness, stuffed full as it was with the banquets of the Italian Greeks and Syracusans, who ate to repletion twice every day, and were never without a partner for the night; and disapproval of the habits which this manner of life produces. For with these habits formed early in life, no man under heaven could possibly attain to wisdom-human nature is not capable of such an extraordinary combination. Temperance also is out of the question for such a man; and the same applies to virtue generally. No city could remain in a state of tranquillity under any laws whatsoever, when men think it right to squander all their property in extravagant, and consider it a duty to be idle in everything else except eating and drinking and the laborious prosecution of debauchery. It follows necessarily that the constitutions of such cities must be constantly changing, tyrannies, oligarchies and democracies succeeding one another, while those who hold the power cannot so much as endure the name of any form of government which maintains justice and equality of rights.

With a mind full of these thoughts, on the top of my previous convictions, I crossed over to Syracuse-led there perhaps by chance-but it really looks as if some higher power was even then planning to lay a foundation for all that has now come to pass with regard to Dion and Syracuse-and for further troubles too, I fear, unless you listen to the advice which is now for the second time offered by me. What do I mean by saying that my arrival in Sicily at that movement proved to be the foundation on which all the sequel rests? I was brought into close intercourse with Dion who was then a young man, and explained to him my views as to the ideals at which men should aim, advising him to carry them out in practice. In doing this I seem to have been unaware that I was, in a fashion, without knowing it, contriving the overthrow of the tyranny which; subsequently took place. For Dion, who rapidly assimilated my teaching as he did all forms of knowledge, listened to me with an eagerness which I had never seen equalled in any young man, and resolved to live for the future in a better way than the majority of Italian and Sicilian Greeks, having set his affection on virtue in preference to pleasure and self-indulgence. The result was that until the death of Dionysios he lived in a way which rendered him somewhat unpopular among those whose manner of life was that which is usual in the courts of despots.

After that event he came to the conclusion that this conviction, which he himself had gained under the influence of good teaching, was not likely to be confined to himself. Indeed, he saw it being actually implanted in other minds-not many perhaps, but

certainly in some; and he thought that with the aid of the Gods, Dionysios might perhaps become one of these, and that, if such a thing did come to pass, the result would be a life of unspeakable happiness both for himself and for the rest of the Syracusans. Further, he thought it essential that I should come to Syracuse by all manner of means and with the utmost possible speed to be his partner in these plans, remembering in his own case how readily intercourse with me had produced in him a longing for the noblest and best life. And if it should produce a similar effect on Dionysios, as his aim was that it should, he had great hope that, without bloodshed, loss of life, and those disastrous events which have now taken place, he would be able to introduce the true life of happiness throughout the whole territory.

Holding these sound views, Dion persuaded Dionysios to send for me; he also wrote himself entreating me to come by all manner of means and with the utmost possible speed, before certain other persons coming in contact with Dionysios should turn him aside into some way of life other than the best. What he said, though perhaps it is rather long to repeat, was as follows: "What opportunities," he said, "shall we wait for, greater than those now offered to us by Providence?" And he described the Syracusan empire in Italy and Sicily, his own influential position in it, and the youth of Dionysios and how strongly his desire was directed towards philosophy and education. His own nephews and relatives, he said, would be readily attracted towards the principles and manner of life described by me, and would be most influential in attracting Dionysios in the same direction, so that, now if ever, we should see the accomplishment of every hope that the same persons might actually become both philosophers and the rulers of great States. These were the appeals addressed to me and much more to the same effect.

My own opinion, so far as the young men were concerned, and the probable line which their conduct would take, was full of apprehension-for young men are quick in forming desires, which often take directions conflicting with one another. But I knew that the character of Dion's mind was naturally a stable one and had also the advantage of somewhat advanced years.

Therefore, I pondered the matter and was in two minds as to whether I ought to listen to entreaties and go, or how I ought to act; and finally the scale turned in favour of the view that, if ever anyone was to try to carry out in practice my ideas about laws and constitutions, now was the time for making the attempt; for if only I could fully convince one man, I should have secured thereby the accomplishment of all good things.

With these views and thus nerved to the task, I sailed from home, in the spirit which some imagined, but principally through a feeling of shame with regard to myself, lest I might some day appear to myself wholly and solely a mere man of words, one who would never of his own will lay his hand to any act. Also there was reason to think that I should be betraying first and foremost my friendship and comradeship with Dion, who in very truth was in a position of considerable danger. If therefore anything should happen to him, or if he were banished by Dionysios and his other enemies and coming to us as exile addressed this question to me: "Plato, I have come to you as a fugitive, not for want of hoplites, nor because I had no cavalry for defence against my enemies, but for want of words and power of persuasion, which I knew to be a special gift of yours,

enabling you to lead young men into the path of goodness and justice, and to establish in every case relations of friendship and comradeship among them. It is for the want of this assistance on your part that I have left Syracuse and am here now. And the disgrace attaching to your treatment of me is a small matter. But philosophy-whose praises you are always singing, while you say she is held in dishonour by the rest of mankind-must we not say that philosophy along with me has now been betrayed, so far as your action was concerned? Had I been living at Megara, you would certainly have come to give me your aid towards the objects for which I asked it; or you would have thought yourself the most contemptible of mankind. But as it is, do you think that you will escape the reputation of cowardice by making excuses about the distance of the journey, the length of the sea voyage, and the amount of labour involved? Far from it." To reproaches of this kind what creditable reply could I have made? Surely none.

I took my departure, therefore, acting, so far as a man can act, in obedience to reason and justice, and for these reasons leaving my own occupations, which were certainly not discreditable ones, to put myself under a tyranny which did not seem likely to harmonise with my teaching or with myself. By my departure I secured my own freedom from the displeasure of Zeus Xenios, and made myself clear of any charge on the part of philosophy, which would have been exposed to detraction, if any disgrace had come upon me for faint-heartedness and cowardice.

On my arrival, to cut a long story short, I found the court of Dionysios full of intrigues and of attempts to create in the sovereign ill-feeling against Dion. I combated these as far as I could, but with very little success; and in the fourth month or thereabouts, charging Dion with conspiracy to seize the throne, Dionysios put him on board a small boat and expelled him from Syracuse with ignominy. All of us who were Dion's friends were afraid that he might take vengeance on one or other of us as an accomplice in Dion's conspiracy. With regard to me, there was even a rumour current in Syracuse that I had been put to death by Dionysios as the cause of all that had occurred. Perceiving that we were all in this state of mind and apprehending that our fears might lead to some serious consequence, he now tried to win all of us over by kindness: me in particular he encouraged, bidding me be of good cheer and entreating me on all grounds to remain. For my flight from him was not likely to redound to his credit, but my staying might do so. Therefore, he made a great pretence of entreating me. And we know that the entreaties of sovereigns are mixed with compulsion. So to secure his object he proceeded to render my departure impossible, bringing me into the acropolis, and establishing me in quarters from which not a single ship's captain would have taken me away against the will of Dionysios, nor indeed without a special messenger sent by him to order my removal. Nor was there a single merchant, or a single official in charge of points of departure from the country, who would have allowed me to depart unaccompanied, and would not have promptly seized me and taken me back to Dionysios, especially since a statement had now been circulated contradicting the previous rumours and giving out that Dionysios was becoming extraordinarily attached to Plato. What were the facts about this attachment? I must tell the truth. As time went on, and as intercourse made him acquainted with my disposition and character, he did become more and more attached to me, and wished me to praise him more than I praised Dion, and to look upon him as more specially my friend than Dion, and he was

extraordinarily eager about this sort of thing. But when confronted with the one way in which this might have been done, if it was to be done at all, he shrank from coming into close and intimate relations with me as a pupil and listener to my discourses on philosophy, fearing the danger suggested by mischief-makers, that he might be ensnared, and so Dion would prove to have accomplished all his object. I endured all this patiently, retaining the purpose with which I had come and the hope that he might come to desire the philosophic life. But his resistance prevailed against me.

The time of my first visit to Sicily and my stay there was taken up with all these incidents. On a later occasion I left home and again came on an urgent summons from Dionysios. But before giving the motives and particulars of my conduct then and showing how suitable and right it was, I must first, in order that I may not treat as the main point what is only a side issue, give you my advice as to what your acts should be in the present position of affairs; afterwards, to satisfy those who put the question why I came a second time, I will deal fully with the facts about my second visit; what I have now to say is this.

He who advises a sick man, whose manner of life is prejudicial to health, is clearly bound first of all to change his patient's manner of life, and if the patient is willing to obey him, he may go on to give him other advice. But if he is not willing, I shall consider one who declines to advise such a patient to be a man and a physician, and one who gives in to him to be unmanly and unprofessional. In the same way with regard to a State, whether it be under a single ruler or more than one, if, while the government is being carried on methodically and in a right course, it asks advice about any details of policy, it is the part of a wise man to advise such people. But when men are travelling altogether outside the path of right government and flatly refuse to move in the right path, and start by giving notice to their adviser that he must leave the government alone and make no change in it under penalty of death-if such men should order their counsellors to pander to their wishes and desires and to advise them in what way their object may most readily and easily be once for all accomplished, I should consider as unmanly one who accepts the duty of giving such forms of advice, and one who refuses it to be a true man.

Holding these views, whenever anyone consults me about any of the weightiest matters affecting his own life, as, for instance, the acquisition of property or the proper treatment of body or mind, if it seems to me that his daily life rests on any system, or if he seems likely to listen to advice about the things on which he consults me, I advise him with readiness, and do not content myself with giving him a merely perfunctory answer. But if a man does not consult me at all, or evidently does not intend to follow my advice, I do not take the initiative in advising such a man, and will not use compulsion to him, even if he be my own son. I would advise a slave under such circumstances, and would use compulsion to him if he were unwilling. To a father or mother I do not think that piety allows one to offer compulsion, unless they are suffering from an attack of insanity; and if they are following any regular habits of life which please them but do not please me, I would not offend them by offering useless advice, nor would I flatter them or truckle to them, providing them with the means of satisfying desires which I myself would sooner die than cherish. The wise man should go through life with the same attitude of mind

towards his country. If she should appear to him to be following a policy which is not a good one, he should say so, provided that his words are not likely either to fall on deaf ears or to lead to the loss of his own life. But force against his native land he should not use in order to bring about a change of constitution, when it is not possible for the best constitution to be introduced without driving men into exile or putting them to death; he should keep quiet and offer up prayers for his own welfare and for that of his country.

These are the principles in accordance with which I should advise you, as also, jointly with Dion, I advised Dionysios, bidding him in the first place to live his daily life in a way that would make him as far as possible master of himself and able to gain faithful friends and supporters, in order that he might not have the same experience as his father. For his father, having taken under his rule many great cities of Sicily which had been utterly destroyed by the barbarians, was not able to found them afresh and to establish in them trustworthy governments carried on by his own supporters, either by men who had no ties of blood with him, or by his brothers whom he had brought up when they were younger, and had raised from humble station to high office and from poverty to immense wealth. Not one of these was he able to work upon by persuasion, instruction, services and ties of kindred, so as to make him a partner in his rule; and he showed himself inferior to Darius with a sevenfold inferiority. For Darius did not put his trust in brothers or in men whom he had brought up, but only in his confederates in the overthrow of the Medes and Eunuchs; and to these he assigned portions of his empire, seven in number, each of them greater than all Sicily; and they were faithful to him and did not attack either him or one another. Thus he showed a pattern of what the good lawgiver and king ought to be; for he drew up laws by which he has secured the Persian empire in safety down to the present time.

Again, to give another instance, the Athenians took under their rule very many cities not founded by themselves, which had been hard hit by the barbarians but were still in existence, and maintained their rule over these for seventy years, because they had in each of them men whom they could trust. But Dionysios, who had gathered the whole of Sicily into a single city, and was so clever that he trusted no one, only secured his own safety with great difficulty. For he was badly off for trustworthy friends; and there is no surer criterion of virtue and vice than this, whether a man is or is not destitute of such friends.

This, then, was the advice which Dion and I gave to Dionysios, since, owing to bringing up which he had received from his father, he had had no advantages in the way of education or of suitable lessons, in the first place...; and, in the second place, that, after starting in this way, he should make friends of others among his connections who were of the same age and were in sympathy with his pursuit of virtue, but above all that he should be in harmony with himself; for this it was of which he was remarkably in need. This we did not say in plain words, for that would not have been safe; but in covert language we maintained that every man in this way would save both himself and those whom he was leading, and if he did not follow this path, he would do just the opposite of this. And after proceeding on the course which we described, and making himself a wise and temperate man, if he were then to found again the cities of Sicily which had been laid waste, and bind them together by laws and constitutions, so as to be loyal to

him and to one another in their resistance to the attacks of the barbarians, he would, we told him, make his father's empire not merely double what it was but many times greater. For, if these things were done, his way would be clear to a more complete subjugation of the Carthaginians than that which befell them in Gelon's time, whereas in our own day his father had followed the opposite course of levying tribute for the barbarians. This was the language and these the exhortations given by us, the conspirators against Dionysios according to the charges circulated from various sources—charges which, prevailing as they did with Dionysios, caused the expulsion of Dion and reduced me to a state of apprehension. But when—to summarise great events which happened in no great time—Dion returned from the Peloponnese and Athens, his advice to Dionysios took the form of action.

To proceed—when Dion had twice over delivered the city and restored it to the citizens, the Syracusans went through the same changes of feeling towards him as Dionysios had gone through, when Dion attempted first to educate him and train him to be a sovereign worthy of supreme power and, when that was done, to be his coadjutor in all the details of his career. Dionysios listened to those who circulated slanders to the effect that Dion was aiming at the tyranny in all the steps which he took at that time his intention being that Dionysios, when his mind had fallen under the spell of culture, should neglect the government and leave it in his hands, and that he should then appropriate it for himself and treacherously depose Dionysios. These slanders were victorious on that occasion; they were so once more when circulated among the Syracusans, winning a victory which took an extraordinary course and proved disgraceful to its authors. The story of what then took place is one which deserves careful attention on the part of those who are inviting me to deal with the present situation.

I, an Athenian and friend of Dion, came as his ally to the court of Dionysios, in order that I might create good will in place of a state war; in my conflict with the authors of these slanders I was worsted. When Dionysios tried to persuade me by offers of honours and wealth to attach myself to him, and with a view to giving a decent colour to Dion's expulsion a witness and friend on his side, he failed completely in his attempt. Later on, when Dion returned from exile, he took with him from Athens two brothers, who had been his friends, not from community in philosophic study, but with the ordinary companionship common among most friends, which they form as the result of relations of hospitality and the intercourse which occurs when one man initiates the other in the mysteries. It was from this kind of intercourse and from services connected with his return that these two helpers in his restoration became his companions. Having come to Sicily, when they perceived that Dion had been misrepresented to the Sicilian Greeks, whom he had liberated, as one that plotted to become monarch, they not only betrayed their companion and friend, but shared personally in the guilt of his murder, standing by his murderers as supporters with weapons in their hands. The guilt and impiety of their conduct I neither excuse nor do I dwell upon it. For many others make it their business to harp upon it, and will make it their business in the future. But I do take exception to the statement that, because they were Athenians, they have brought shame upon this city. For I say that he too is an Athenian who refused to betray this same Dion, when he had the offer of riches and many other honours. For his was no common or vulgar

friendship, but rested on community in liberal education, and this is the one thing in which a wise man will put his trust, far more than in ties of personal and bodily kinship. So the two murderers of Dion were not of sufficient importance to be causes of disgrace to this city, as though they had been men of any note.

All this has been said with a view to counselling the friends and family of Dion. And in addition to this I give for the third time to you the same advice and counsel which I have given twice before to others-not to enslave Sicily or any other State to despots-this my counsel but-to put it under the rule of laws-for the other course is better neither for the enslavers nor for the enslaved, for themselves, their children's children and descendants; the attempt is in every way fraught with disaster. It is only small and mean natures that are bent upon seizing such gains for themselves, natures that know nothing of goodness and justice, divine as well as human, in this life and in the next.

These are the lessons which I tried to teach, first to Dion, secondly to Dionysios, and now for the third time to you. Do you obey me thinking of Zeus the Preserver, the patron of third ventures, and looking at the lot of Dionysios and Dion, of whom the one who disobeyed me is living in dishonour, while he who obeyed me has died honourably. For the one thing which is wholly right and noble is to strive for that which is most honourable for a man's self and for his country, and to face the consequences whatever they may be. For none of us can escape death, nor, if a man could do so, would it, as the vulgar suppose, make him happy. For nothing evil or good, which is worth mentioning at all, belongs to things soulless; but good or evil will be the portion of every soul, either while attached to the body or when separated from it.

And we should in very truth always believe those ancient and sacred teachings, which declare that the soul is immortal, that it has judges, and suffers the greatest penalties when it has been separated from the body. Therefore also we should consider it a lesser evil to suffer great wrongs and outrages than to do them. The covetous man, impoverished as he is in the soul, turns a deaf ear to this teaching; or if he hears it, he laughs it to scorn with fancied superiority, and shamelessly snatches for himself from every source whatever his bestial fancy supposes will provide for him the means of eating or drinking or glutting himself with that slavish and gross pleasure which is falsely called after the goddess of love. He is blind and cannot see in those acts of plunder which are accompanied by impiety what heinous guilt is attached to each wrongful deed, and that the offender must drag with him the burden of this impiety while he moves about on earth, and when he has travelled beneath the earth on a journey which has every circumstance of shame and misery.

It was by urging these and other like truths that I convinced Dion, and it is I who have the best right to be angered with his murderers in much the same way as I have with Dionysios. For both they and he have done the greatest injury to me, and I might almost say to all mankind, they by slaying the man that was willing to act righteously, and he by refusing to act righteously during the whole of his rule, when he held supreme power, in which rule if philosophy and power had really met together, it would have sent forth a light to all men, Greeks and barbarians, establishing fully for all the true belief that there can be no happiness either for the community or for the individual man, unless he

passes his life under the rule of righteousness with the guidance of wisdom, either possessing these virtues in himself, or living under the rule of godly men and having received a right training and education in morals. These were the aims which Dionysios injured, and for me everything else is a trifling injury compared with this.

The murderer of Dion has, without knowing it, done the same as Dionysios. For as regards Dion, I know right well, so far as it is possible for a man to say anything positively about other men, that, if he had got the supreme power, he would never have turned his mind to any other form of rule, but that, dealing first with Syracuse, his own native land, when he had made an end of her slavery, clothed her in bright apparel, and given her the garb of freedom, he would then by every means in his power have ordered aright the lives of his fellow-citizens by suitable and excellent laws; and the thing next in order, which he would have set his heart to accomplish, was to found again all the States of Sicily and make them free from the barbarians, driving out some and subduing others, an easier task for him than it was for Hiero. If these things had been accomplished by a man who was just and brave and temperate and a philosopher, the same belief with regard to virtue would have been established among the majority which, if Dionysios had been won over, would have been established, I might almost say, among all mankind and would have given them salvation. But now some higher power or avenging fiend has fallen upon them, inspiring them with lawlessness, godlessness and acts of recklessness issuing from ignorance, the seed from which all evils for all mankind take root and grow and will in future bear the bitterest harvest for those who brought them into being. This ignorance it was which in that second venture wrecked and ruined everything.

And now, for good luck's sake, let us on this third venture abstain from words of ill omen. But, nevertheless, I advise you, his friends, to imitate in Dion his love for his country and his temperate habits of daily life, and to try with better auspices to carry out his wishes-what these were, you have heard from me in plain words. And whoever among you cannot live the simple Dorian life according to the customs of your forefathers, but follows the manner of life of Dion's murderers and of the Sicilians, do not invite this man to join you, or expect him to do any loyal or salutary act; but invite all others to the work of resettling all the States of Sicily and establishing equality under the laws, summoning them from Sicily itself and from the whole Peloponnese-and have no fear even of Athens; for there, also, are men who excel all mankind in their devotion to virtue and in hatred of the reckless acts of those who shed the blood of friends.

But if, after all, this is work for a future time, whereas immediate action is called for by the disorders of all sorts and kinds which arise every day from your state of civil strife, every man to whom Providence has given even a moderate share of right intelligence ought to know that in times of civil strife there is no respite from trouble till the victors make an end of feeding their grudge by combats and banishments and executions, and of wreaking their vengeance on their enemies. They should master themselves and, enacting impartial laws, framed not to gratify themselves more than the conquered party, should compel men to obey these by two restraining forces, respect and fear; fear, because they are the masters and can display superior force; respect, because they rise superior to pleasures and are willing and able to be servants to the laws. There

is no other way save this for terminating the troubles of a city that is in a state of civil strife; but a constant continuance of internal disorders, struggles, hatred and mutual distrust is the common lot of cities which are in that plight.

Therefore, those who have for the time being gained the upper hand, when they desire to secure their position, must by their own act and choice select from all Hellas men whom they have ascertained to be the best for the purpose. These must in the first place be men of mature years, who have children and wives at home, and, as far as possible, a long line of ancestors of good repute, and all must be possessed of sufficient property. For a city of ten thousand householders their numbers should be fifty; that is enough. These they must induce to come from their own homes by entreaties and the promise of the highest honours; and having induced them to come they must entreat and command them to draw up laws after binding themselves by oath to show no partiality either to conquerors or to conquered, but to give equal and common rights to the whole State.

When laws have been enacted, what everything then hinges on is this. If the conquerors show more obedience to the laws than the conquered, the whole State will be full of security and happiness, and there will be an escape from all your troubles. But if they do not, then do not summon me or any other helper to aid you against those who do not obey the counsel I now give you. For this course is akin to that which Dion and I attempted to carry out with our hearts set on the welfare of Syracuse. It is indeed a second best course. The first and best was that scheme of welfare to all mankind which we attempted to carry out with the co-operation of Dionysios; but some chance, mightier than men, brought it to nothing. Do you now, with good fortune attending you and with Heaven's help, try to bring your efforts to a happier issue.

Let this be the end of my advice and injunction and of the narrative of my first visit to Dionysios. Whoever wishes may next hear of my second journey and voyage, and learn that it was a reasonable and suitable proceeding. My first period of residence in Sicily was occupied in the way which I related before giving my advice to the relatives and friends of Dion. After those events I persuaded Dionysios by such arguments as I could to let me go; and we made an agreement as to what should be done when peace was made; for at that time there was a state of war in Sicily. Dionysios said that, when he had put the affairs of his empire in a position of greater safety for himself, he would send for Dion and me again; and he desired that Dion should regard what had befallen him not as an exile, but as a change of residence. I agreed to come again on these conditions.

When peace had been made, he began sending for me; he requested that Dion should wait for another year, but begged that I should by all means come. Dion now kept urging and entreating me to go. For persistent rumours came from Sicily that Dionysios was now once more possessed by an extraordinary desire for philosophy. For this reason Dion pressed me urgently not to decline his invitation. But though I was well aware that as regards philosophy such symptoms were not uncommon in young men, still it seemed to me safer at that time to part company altogether with Dion and Dionysios; and I offended both of them by replying that I was an old man, and that the steps now

being taken were quite at variance with the previous agreement.

After this, it seems, Archytes came to the court of Dionysios. Before my departure I had brought him and his Tarentine circle into friendly relations with Dionysios. There were some others in Syracuse who had received some instruction from Dion, and others had learnt from these, getting their heads full of erroneous teaching on philosophical questions. These, it seems, were attempting to hold discussions with Dionysios on questions connected with such subjects, in the idea that he had been fully instructed in my views. Now is not at all devoid of natural gifts for learning, and he has a great craving for honour and glory. What was said probably pleased him, and he felt some shame when it became clear that he had not taken advantage of my teaching during my visit. For these reasons he conceived a desire for more definite instruction, and his love of glory was an additional incentive to him. The real reasons why he had learnt nothing during my previous visit have just been set forth in the preceding narrative. Accordingly, now that I was safe at home and had refused his second invitation, as I just now related, Dionysios seems to have felt all manner of anxiety lest certain people should suppose that I was unwilling to visit him again because I had formed a poor opinion of his natural gifts and character, and because, knowing as I did his manner of life, I disapproved of it.

It is right for me to speak the truth, and make no complaint if anyone, after hearing the facts, forms a poor opinion of my philosophy, and thinks that the tyrant was in the right. Dionysios now invited me for the third time, sending a trireme to ensure me comfort on the voyage; he sent also Archedemos-one of those who had spent some time with Archytes, and of whom he supposed that I had a higher opinion than of any of the Sicilian Greeks-and, with him, other men of repute in Sicily. These all brought the same report, that Dionysios had made progress in philosophy. He also sent a very long letter, knowing as he did my relations with Dion and Dion's eagerness also that I should take ship and go to Syracuse. The letter was framed in its opening sentences to meet all these conditions, and the tenor of it was as follows: "Dionysios to Plato," here followed the customary greeting and immediately after it he said, "If in compliance with our request you come now, in the first place, Dion's affairs will be dealt with in whatever way you yourself desire; I know that you will desire what is reasonable, and I shall consent to it. But if not, none of Dion's affairs will have results in accordance with your wishes, with regard either to Dion himself or to other matters." This he said in these words; the rest it would be tedious and inopportune to quote. Other letters arrived from Archytes and the Tarentines, praising the philosophical studies of Dionysios and saying that, if I did not now come, I should cause a complete rupture in their friendship with Dionysios, which had been brought about by me and was of no small importance to their political interests.

When this invitation came to me at that time in such terms, and those who had come from Sicily and Italy were trying to drag me thither, while my friends at Athens were literally pushing me out with their urgent entreaties, it was the same old tale-that I must not betray Dion and my Tarentine friends and supporters. Also I myself had a lurking feeling that there was nothing surprising in the fact that a young man, quick to learn, hearing talk of the great truths of philosophy, should feel a craving for the higher life. I thought therefore that I must put the matter definitely to the test to see whether his

desire was genuine or the reverse, and on no account leave such an impulse unaided nor make myself responsible for such a deep and real disgrace, if the reports brought by anyone were really true. So blindfolding myself with this reflection, I set out, with many fears and with no very favourable anticipations, as was natural enough. However, I went, and my action on this occasion at any rate was really a case of "the third to the Preserver," for I had the good fortune to return safely; and for this I must, next to the God, thank Dionysios, because, though many wished to make an end of me, he prevented them and paid some proper respect to my situation.

On my arrival, I thought that first I must put to the test the question whether Dionysios had really been kindled with the fire of philosophy, or whether all the reports which had come to Athens were empty rumours. Now there is a way of putting such things to the test which is not to be despised and is well suited to monarchs, especially to those who have got their heads full of erroneous teaching, which immediately my arrival I found to be very much the case with Dionysios. One should show such men what philosophy is in all its extent; what their range of studies is by which it is approached, and how much labour it involves. For the man who has heard this, if he has the true philosophic spirit and that godlike temperament which makes him a kin to philosophy and worthy of it, thinks that he has been told of a marvellous road lying before him, that he must forthwith press on with all his strength, and that life is not worth living if he does anything else. After this he uses to the full his own powers and those of his guide in the path, and relaxes not his efforts, till he has either reached the end of the whole course of study or gained such power that he is not incapable of directing his steps without the aid of a guide. This is the spirit and these are the thoughts by which such a man guides his life, carrying out his work, whatever his occupation may be, but throughout it all ever cleaving to philosophy and to such rules of diet in his daily life as will give him inward sobriety and therewith quickness in learning, a good memory, and reasoning power; the kind of life which is opposed to this he consistently hates. Those who have not the true philosophic temper, but a mere surface colouring of opinions penetrating, like sunburn, only skin deep, when they see how great the range of studies is, how much labour is involved in it, and how necessary to the pursuit it is to have an orderly regulation of the daily life, come to the conclusion that the thing is difficult and impossible for them, and are actually incapable of carrying out the course of study; while some of them persuade themselves that they have sufficiently studied the whole matter and have no need of any further effort. This is the sure test and is the safest one to apply to those who live in luxury and are incapable of continuous effort; it ensures that such a man shall not throw the blame upon his teacher but on himself, because he cannot bring to the pursuit all the qualities necessary to it. Thus it came about that I said to Dionysios what I did say on that occasion.

I did not, however, give a complete exposition, nor did Dionysios ask for one. For he professed to know many, and those the most important, points, and to have a sufficient hold of them through instruction given by others. I hear also that he has since written about what he heard from me, composing what professes to be his own handbook, very different, so he says, from the doctrines which he heard from me; but of its contents I know nothing; I know indeed that others have written on the same subjects; but who they are, is more than they know themselves. Thus much at least, I can say about all

writers, past or future, who say they know the things to which I devote myself, whether by hearing the teaching of me or of others, or by their own discoveries-that according to my view it is not possible for them to have any real skill in the matter. There neither is nor ever will be a treatise of mine on the subject. For it does not admit of exposition like other branches of knowledge; but after much converse about the matter itself and a life lived together, suddenly a light, as it were, is kindled in one soul by a flame that leaps to it from another, and thereafter sustains itself. Yet this much I know-that if the things were written or put into words, it would be done best by me, and that, if they were written badly, I should be the person most pained. Again, if they had appeared to me to admit adequately of writing and exposition, what task in life could I have performed nobler than this, to write what is of great service to mankind and to bring the nature of things into the light for all to see? But I do not think it a good thing for men that there should be a disquisition, as it is called, on this topic-except for some few, who are able with a little teaching to find it out for themselves. As for the rest, it would fill some of them quite illogically with a mistaken feeling of contempt, and others with lofty and vain-glorious expectations, as though they had learnt something high and mighty.

On this point I intend to speak a little more at length; for perhaps, when I have done so, things will be clearer with regard to my present subject. There is an argument which holds good against the man ventures to put anything whatever into writing on questions of this nature; it has often before been stated by me, and it seems suitable to the present occasion.

For everything that exists there are three instruments by which the knowledge of it is necessarily imparted; fourth, there is the knowledge itself, and, as fifth, we must count the thing itself which is known and truly exists. The first is the name, the second the definition, the third the image, and the fourth the knowledge. If you wish to learn what I mean, take these in the case of one instance, and so understand them in the case of all. A circle is a thing spoken of, and its name is that very word which we have just uttered. The second thing belonging to it is its definition, made up names and verbal forms. For that which has the name "round," "annular," or, "circle," might be defined as that which has the distance from its circumference to its centre everywhere equal. Third, comes that which is drawn and rubbed out again, or turned on a lathe and broken up-none of which things can happen to the circle itself-to which the other things, mentioned have reference; for it is something of a different order from them. Fourth, comes knowledge, intelligence and right opinion about these things. Under this one head we must group everything which has its existence, not in words nor in bodily shapes, but in souls-from which it is dear that it is something different from the nature of the circle itself and from the three things mentioned before. Of these things intelligence comes closest in kinship and likeness to the fifth, and the others are farther distant.

The same applies to straight as well as to circular form, to colours, to the good, the, beautiful, the just, to all bodies whether manufactured or coming into being in the course of nature, to fire, water, and all such things, to every living being, to character in souls, and to all things done and suffered. For in the case of all these, no one, if he has not some how or other got hold of the four things first mentioned, can ever be completely a partaker of knowledge of the fifth. Further, on account of the weakness of language,

these (i.e., the four) attempt to show what each thing is like, not less than what each thing is. For this reason no man of intelligence will venture to express his philosophical views in language, especially not in language that is unchangeable, which is true of that which is set down in written characters.

Again you must learn the point which comes next. Every circle, of those which are by the act of man drawn or even turned on a lathe, is full of that which is opposite to the fifth thing. For everywhere it has contact with the straight. But the circle itself, we say, has nothing in either smaller or greater, of that which is its opposite. We say also that the name is not a thing of permanence for any of them, and that nothing prevents the things now called round from being called straight, and the straight things round; for those who make changes and call things by opposite names, nothing will be less permanent (than a name). Again with regard to the definition, if it is made up of names and verbal forms, the same remark holds that there is no sufficiently durable permanence in it. And there is no end to the instances of the ambiguity from which each of the four suffers; but the greatest of them is that which we mentioned a little earlier, that, whereas there are two things, that which has real being, and that which is only a quality, when the soul is seeking to know, not the quality, but the essence, each of the four, presenting to the soul by word and in act that which it is not seeking (i.e., the quality), a thing open to refutation by the senses, being merely the thing presented to the soul in each particular case whether by statement or the act of showing, fills, one may say, every man with puzzlement and perplexity.

Now in subjects in which, by reason of our defective education, we have not been accustomed even to search for the truth, but are satisfied with whatever images are presented to us, we are not held up to ridicule by one another, the questioned by questioners, who can pull to pieces and criticise the four things. But in subjects where we try to compel a man to give a clear answer about the fifth, any one of those who are capable of overthrowing an antagonist gets the better of us, and makes the man, who gives an exposition in speech or writing or in replies to questions, appear to most of his hearers to know nothing of the things on which he is attempting to write or speak; for they are sometimes not aware that it is not the mind of the writer or speaker which is proved to be at fault, but the defective nature of each of the four instruments. The process however of dealing with all of these, as the mind moves up and down to each in turn, does after much effort give birth in a well-constituted mind to knowledge of that which is well constituted. But if a man is ill-constituted by nature (as the state of the soul is naturally in the majority both in its capacity for learning and in what is called moral character)-or it may have become so by deterioration-not even Lynceus could endow such men with the power of sight.

In one word, the man who has no natural kinship with this matter cannot be made akin to it by quickness of learning or memory; for it cannot be engendered at all in natures which are foreign to it. Therefore, if men are not by nature kinship allied to justice and all other things that are honourable, though they may be good at learning and remembering other knowledge of various kinds-or if they have the kinship but are slow learners and have no memory-none of all these will ever learn to the full the truth about virtue and vice. For both must be learnt together; and together also must be learnt, by

complete and long continued study, as I said at the beginning, the true and the false about all that has real being. After much effort, as names, definitions, sights, and other data of sense, are brought into contact and friction one with another, in the course of scrutiny and kindly testing by men who proceed by question and answer without ill will, with a sudden flash there shines forth understanding about every problem, and an intelligence whose efforts reach the furthest limits of human powers. Therefore every man of worth, when dealing with matters of worth, will be far from exposing them to ill feeling and misunderstanding among men by committing them to writing. In one word, then, it may be known from this that, if one sees written treatises composed by anyone, either the laws of a lawgiver, or in any other form whatever, these are not for that man the things of most worth, if he is a man of worth, but that his treasures are laid up in the fairest spot that he possesses. But if these things were worked at by him as things of real worth, and committed to writing, then surely, not gods, but men "have themselves bereft him of his wits."

Anyone who has followed this discourse and digression will know well that, if Dionysios or anyone else, great or small, has written a treatise on the highest matters and the first principles of things, he has, so I say, neither heard nor learnt any sound teaching about the subject of his treatise; otherwise, he would have had the same reverence for it, which I have, and would have shrunk from putting it forth into a world of discord and uncomeliness. For he wrote it, not as an aid to memory-since there is no risk of forgetting it, if a man's soul has once laid hold of it; for it is expressed in the shortest of statements-but if he wrote it at all, it was from a mean craving for honour, either putting it forth as his own invention, or to figure as a man possessed of culture, of which he was not worthy, if his heart was set on the credit of possessing it. If then Dionysios gained this culture from the one lesson which he had from me, we may perhaps grant him the possession of it, though how he acquired it-God wot, as the Theban says; for I gave him the teaching, which I have described, on that one occasion and never again.

The next point which requires to be made clear to anyone who wishes to discover how things really happened, is the reason why it came about that I did not continue my teaching in a second and third lesson and yet oftener. Does Dionysios, after a single lesson, believe himself to know the matter, and has he an adequate knowledge of it, either as having discovered it for himself or learnt it before from others, or does he believe my teaching to be worthless, or, thirdly, to be beyond his range and too great for him, and himself to be really unable to live as one who gives his mind to wisdom and virtue? For if he thinks it worthless, he will have to contend with many who say the opposite, and who would be held in far higher repute as judges than Dionysios, if on the other hand, he thinks he has discovered or learnt the things and that they are worth having as part of a liberal education, how could he, unless he is an extraordinary person, have so recklessly dishonoured the master who has led the way in these subjects? How he dishonoured him, I will now state.

Up to this time he had allowed Dion to remain in possession of his property and to receive the income from it. But not long after the foregoing events, as if he had entirely forgotten his letter to that effect, he no longer allowed Dion's trustees to send him remittances to the Peloponnese, on the pretence that the owner of the property was not

Dion but Dion's son, his own nephew, of whom he himself was legally the trustee. These were the actual facts which occurred up to the point which we have reached. They had opened my eyes as to the value of Dionysios' desire for philosophy, and I had every right to complain, whether I wished to do so or not. Now by this time it was summer and the season for sea voyages; therefore I decided that I must not be vexed with Dionysios rather than with myself and those who had forced me to come for the third time into the strait of Scylla, that once again I might to fell Charybdis measure back my course, but must tell Dionysios that it was impossible for me to remain after this outrage had been put upon Dion. He tried to soothe me and begged me to remain, not thinking it desirable for himself that I should arrive post haste in person as the bearer of such tidings. When his entreaties produced no effect, he promised that he himself would provide me with transport. For my intention was to embark on one of the trading ships and sail away, being indignant and thinking it my duty to face all dangers, in case I was prevented from going-since plainly and obviously I was doing no wrong, but was the party wronged.

Seeing me not at all inclined to stay, he devised the following scheme to make me stay during that sading season. On the next day he came to me and made a plausible proposal: "Let us put an end," he said, "to these constant quarrels between you and me about Dion and his affairs. For your sake I will do this for Dion. I require him to take his own property and reside in the Peloponnese, not as an exile, but on the understanding that it is open for him to migrate here, when this step has the joint approval of himself, me, and you his friends; and this shall be open to him on the understanding that he does not plot against me. You and your friends and Dion's friends here must be sureties for him in this, and he must give you security. Let the funds which he receives be deposited in the Peloponnese and at Athens, with persons approved by you, and let Dion enjoy the income from them but have no power to take them out of deposit without the approval of you and your friends. For I have no great confidence in him, that, if he has this property at his disposal, he will act justly towards me, for it will be no small amount; but I have more confidence in you and your friends. See if this satisfies you; and on these conditions remain for the present year, and at the next season you shall depart taking the property with you. I am quite sure that Dion will be grateful to you, if you accomplish so much on his behalf."

When I heard this proposal I was vexed, but after reflection said I would let him know my view of it on the following day. We agreed to that effect for the moment, and afterwards when I was by myself I pondered the matter in much distress. The first reflection that came up, leading the way in my self-communing, was this: "Come suppose that Dionysios intends to do none of the things which he has mentioned, but that, after my departure, he writes a plausible letter to Dion, and orders several of his creatures to write to the same effect, telling him of the proposal which he has now made to me, making out that he was willing to do what he proposed, but that I refused and completely neglected Dion's interests. Further, suppose that he is not willing to allow my departure, and without giving personal orders to any of the merchants, makes it clear, as he easily can, to all that he not wish me to sail, will anyone consent to take me as a passenger, when I leave the house: of Dionysios?"

For in addition to my other troubles, I was lodging at that time in the garden which surround his house, from which even the gatekeeper would have refused to let me go, unless an order had been sent to him from Dionysios. "Suppose however that I wait for the year, I shall be able to write word of these things to Dion, stating the position in which I am, and the steps which I am trying to take. And if Dionysios does any of the things which he says, I shall have accomplished something that is not altogether to be sneered at; for Dion's property is, at a fair estimate, perhaps not less than a hundred talents. If however the prospect which I see looming in the future takes the course which may reasonably be expected, I know not what I shall do with myself. Still it is perhaps necessary to go on working for a year, and to attempt to prove by actual fact the machinations of Dionysios."

Having come to this decision, on the following day I said to Dionysios, "I have decided to remain. But," I continued, "I must ask that you will not regard me as empowered to act for Dion, but will along with me write a letter to him, stating what has now been decided, and enquire whether this course satisfies him. If it does not, and if he has other wishes and demands, he must write particulars of them as soon as possible, and you must not as yet take any hasty step with regard to his interests."

This was what was said and this was the agreement which was made, almost in these words. Well, after this the trading-ships took their departure, and it was no longer possible for me to take mine, when Dionysios, if you please, addressed me with the remark that half the property must be regarded as belonging to Dion and half to his son. Therefore, he said, he would sell it, and when it was sold would give half to me to take away, and would leave half on the spot for the son. This course, he said, was the most just. This proposal was a blow to me, and I thought it absurd to argue any longer with him; however, I said that we must wait for Dion's letter, and then once more write to tell him of this new proposal. His next step was the brilliant one of selling the whole of Dion's property, using his own discretion with regard to the manner and terms of the sale and of the purchasers. He spoke not a word to me about the matter from beginning to end, and I followed his example and never talked to him again about Dion's affairs; for I did not think that I could do any good by doing so. This is the history so far of my efforts to come to the rescue of philosophy and of my friends.

After this Dionysios and I went on with our daily life, I with my eyes turned abroad like a bird yearning to fly from its perch, and he always devising some new way of scaring me back and of keeping a tight hold on Dion's property. However, we gave out to all Sicily that we were friends. Dionysios, now deserting the policy of his father, attempted to lower the pay of the older members of his body guard. The soldiers were furious, and, assembling in great numbers, declared that they would not submit. He attempted to use force to them, shutting the gates of the acropolis; but they charged straight for the walls, yelling out an unintelligible and ferocious war cry. Dionysios took fright and conceded all their demands and more to the peltasts then assembled.

A rumour soon spread that Heracleides had been the cause of all the trouble. Hearing this, Heracleides kept out of the way. Dionysios was trying to get hold of him, and being unable to do so, sent for Theodotes to come to him in his garden. It happened that I was

walking in the garden at the same time. I neither know nor did I hear the rest of what passed between them, but what Theodotes said to Dionysios in my presence I know and remember. "Plato," he said, "I am trying to convince our friend Dionysios that, if I am able to bring Heracleides before us to defend himself on the charges which have been made against him, and if he decides that Heracleides must no longer live in Sicily, he should be allowed (this is my point) to take his son and wife and sail to the Peloponnese and reside there, taking no action there against Dionysios and enjoying the income of his property. I have already sent for him and will send for him again; and if he comes in obedience either to my former message or to this one—well and good. But I beg and entreat Dionysios that, if anyone finds Heracleides either in the country or here, no harm shall come to him, but that he may retire from the country till Dionysios comes to some other decision. Do you agree to this?" he added, addressing Dionysios. "I agree," he replied, "that even if he is found at your house, no harm shall be done to him beyond what has now been said."

On the following day Eurybios and Theodotes came to me in the evening, both greatly disturbed. Theodotes said, "Plato, you were present yesterday during the promises made by Dionysios to me and to you about Heracleides?" "Certainly," I replied. "Well," he continued, "at this moment peltasts are scouring the country seeking to arrest Heracleides; and he must be somewhere in this neighbourhood. For Heaven's sake come with us to Dionysios." So we went and stood in the presence of Dionysios; and those two stood shedding silent tears, while I said: "These men are afraid that you may take strong measures with regard to Heracleides contrary to what was agreed yesterday. For it seems that he has returned and has been seen somewhere about here." On hearing this he blazed up and turned all colours, as a man would in a rage. Theodotes, falling before him in tears, took his hand and entreated him to do nothing of the sort. But I broke in and tried to encourage him, saying: "Be of good cheer, Theodotes; Dionysios will not have the heart to take any fresh step contrary to his promises of yesterday." Fixing his eye on me, and assuming his most autocratic air he said, "To you I promised nothing small or great." "By the gods," I said, "you did promise that forbearance for which our friend here now appeals." With these words I turned away and went out. After this he continued the hunt for Heracleides, and Theodotes, sending messages, urged Heracleides to take flight. Dionysios sent out Teisias and some peltasts with orders to pursue him. But Heracleides, as it was said, was just in time, by a small fraction of a day, in making his escape into Carthaginian territory.

After this Dionysios thought that his long cherished scheme not to restore Dion's property would give him a plausible excuse for hostility towards me; and first of all he sent me out of the acropolis, finding a pretext that the women were obliged to hold a sacrificial service for ten days in the garden in which I had my lodging. He therefore ordered me to stay outside in the house of Archedemos during this period. While I was there, Theodotes sent for me and made a great outpouring of indignation at these occurrences, throwing the blame on Dionysios. Hearing that I had been to see Theodotes he regarded this, as another excuse, sister to the previous one, for quarrelling with me. Sending a messenger he enquired if I had really been conferring with Theodotes on his invitation "Certainly," I replied, "Well," continued the messenger, "he ordered me to tell you that you are not acting at all well in preferring always Dion

and Dion's friends to him." And he did not send for me to return to his house, as though it were now clear that Theodotes and Heracleides were my friends, and he my enemy. He also thought that I had no kind feelings towards him because the property of Dion was now entirely done for.

After this I resided outside the acropolis among the mercenaries. Various people then came to me, among them those of the ships' crews who came from Athens, my own fellow citizens, and reported that I was evil spoken of among the peltasts, and that some of them were threatening to make an end of me, if they could get hold of me. Accordingly I devised the following plan for my safety.

I sent to Archytes and my other friends in Taras, telling them the plight I was in. Finding some excuse for an embassy from their city, they sent a thirty-oared galley with Lamiscos, one of themselves, who came and entreated Dionysios about me, saying that I wanted to go, and that he should on no account stand in my way. He consented and allowed me to go, giving me money for the journey. But for Dion's property I made no further request, nor was any of it restored.

I made my way to the Peloponnese to Olympia, where I found Dion a spectator at the Games, and told him what had occurred. Calling Zeus to be his witness, he at once urged me with my relatives and friends to make preparations for taking vengeance on Dionysios—our ground for action being the breach of faith to a guest—so he put it and regarded it, while his own was his unjust expulsion and banishment. Hearing this, I told him that he might call my friends to his aid, if they wished to go; "But for myself," I continued, "you and others in a way forced me to be the sharer of Dionysios' table and hearth and his associate in the acts of religion. He probably believed the current slanders, that I was plotting with you against him and his despotic rule; yet feelings of scruple prevailed with him, and he spared my life. Again, I am hardly of the age for being comrade in arms to anyone; also I stand as a neutral between you, if ever you desire friendship and wish to benefit one another; so long as you aim at injuring one another, call others to your aid." This I said, because I was disgusted with my misguided journeyings to Sicily and my ill-fortune there. But they disobeyed me and would not listen to my attempts at reconciliation, and so brought on their own heads all the evils which have since taken place. For if Dionysios had restored to Dion his property or been reconciled with him on any terms, none of these things would have happened, so far as human foresight can foretell. Dion would have easily been kept in check by my wishes and influence. But now, rushing upon one another, they have caused universal disaster.

Dion's aspiration however was the same that I should say my own or that of any other right-minded man ought to be. With regard to his own power, his friends and his country the ideal of such a man would be to win the greatest power and honour by rendering the greatest services. And this end is not attained if a man gets riches for himself, his supporters and his country, by forming plots and getting together conspirators, being all the while a poor creature, not master of himself, overcome by the cowardice which fears to fight against pleasures; nor is it attained if he goes on to kill the men of substance, whom he speaks of as the enemy, and to plunder their possessions, and invites his confederates and supporters to do the same, with the object that no one shall say that it

is his fault, if he complains of being poor. The same is true if anyone renders services of this kind to the State and receives honours from her for distributing by decrees the property of the few among the many-or if, being in charge the affairs of a great State which rules over many small ones, he unjustly appropriates to his own State the possessions of the small ones. For neither a Dion nor any other man will, with his eyes open, make his way by steps like these to a power which will be fraught with destruction to himself and his descendants for all time; but he will advance towards constitutional government and the framing of the justest and best laws, reaching these ends without executions and murders even on the smallest scale.

This course Dion actually followed, thinking it preferable to suffer iniquitous deeds rather than to do them; but, while taking precautions against them, he nevertheless, when he had reached the climax of victory over his enemies, took a false step and fell, a catastrophe not at all surprising. For a man of piety, temperance and wisdom, when dealing with the impious, would not be entirely blind to the character of such men, but it would perhaps not be surprising if he suffered the catastrophe that might befall a good ship's captain, who would not be entirely unaware of the approach of a storm, but might be unaware of its extraordinary and startling violence, and might therefore be overwhelmed by its force. The same thing caused Dion's downfall. For he was not unaware that his assailants were thoroughly bad men, but he was unaware how high a pitch of infatuation and of general wickedness and greed they had reached. This was the cause of his downfall, which has involved Sicily in countless sorrows.

As to the steps which should be taken after the events which I have now related, my advice has been given pretty fully and may be regarded as finished; and if you ask my reasons for recounting the story of my second journey to Sicily, it seemed to me essential that an account of it must be given because of the strange and paradoxical character of the incidents. If in this present account of them they appear to anyone more intelligible, and seem to anyone to show sufficient grounds in view of the circumstances, the present statement is adequate and not too lengthy.

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The First Ennead

First Tractate
The Animate and the Man

1. Pleasure and distress, fear and courage, desire and aversion, where have these affections and experiences their seat?

Clearly, either in the Soul alone, or in the Soul as employing the body, or in some third entity deriving from both. And for this third entity, again, there are two possible modes: it might be either a blend or a distinct form due to the blending.

And what applies to the affections applies also to whatsoever acts, physical or mental, spring from them.

We have, therefore, to examine discursive-reason and the ordinary mental action upon objects of sense, and enquire whether these have the one seat with the affections and experiences, or perhaps sometimes the one seat, sometimes another.

And we must consider also our acts of Intellection, their mode and their seat.

And this very examining principle, which investigates and decides in these matters, must be brought to light.

Firstly, what is the seat of Sense-Perception? This is the obvious beginning since the affections and experiences either are sensations of some kind or at least never occur apart from sensation.

2. This first enquiry obliges us to consider at the outset the nature of the Soul- that is whether a distinction is to be made between Soul and Essential Soul [between an individual Soul and the Soul-Kind in itself]. *

* All matter shown in brackets is added by the translator for clearness' sake and, therefore, is not canonical. S.M.

If such a distinction holds, then the Soul [in man] is some sort of a composite and at once we may agree that it is a recipient and- if only reason allows- that all the affections and experiences really have their seat in the Soul, and with the affections every state and mood, good and bad alike.

But if Soul [in man] and Essential Soul are one and the same, then the Soul will be an Ideal-Form unreceptive of all those activities which it imparts to another Kind but possessing within itself that native Act of its own which Reason manifests.

If this be so, then, indeed, we may think of the Soul as an immortal- if the immortal, the imperishable, must be impassive, giving out something of itself but itself taking nothing from without except for what it receives from the Existents prior to itself from which Existents, in that they are the nobler, it cannot be sundered.

Now what could bring fear to a nature thus unreceptive of all the outer? Fear demands feeling. Nor is there place for courage: courage implies the presence of danger. And such desires as are satisfied by the filling or voiding of the body, must be proper to something very different from the Soul, to that only which admits of replenishment and voidance.

And how could the Soul lend itself to any admixture? An essential is not mixed. Or of the intrusion of anything alien? If it did, it would be seeking the destruction of its own nature. Pain must be equally far from it. And Grief- how or for what could it grieve? Whatever possesses Existence is supremely free, dwelling, unchangeable, within its own peculiar nature. And can any increase bring joy, where nothing, not even anything good, can accrue? What such an Existent is, it is unchangeably.

Thus assuredly Sense-Perception, Discursive-Reasoning; and all our ordinary mentation are foreign to the Soul: for sensation is a receiving- whether of an Ideal-Form or of an impassive body- and reasoning and all ordinary mental action deal with sensation.

The question still remains to be examined in the matter of the intellections- whether these are to be assigned to the Soul- and as to Pure-Pleasure, whether this belongs to the Soul in its solitary state.

3. We may treat of the Soul as in the body- whether it be set above it or actually within it- since the association of the two constitutes the one thing called the living organism, the Animate.

Now from this relation, from the Soul using the body as an instrument, it does not follow that the Soul must share the body's experiences: a man does not himself feel all the experiences of the tools with which he is working.

It may be objected that the Soul must however, have Sense-Perception since its use of its instrument must acquaint it with the external conditions, and such knowledge comes by way of sense. Thus, it will be argued, the eyes are the instrument of seeing, and seeing may bring distress to the soul: hence the Soul may feel sorrow and pain and every other affection that belongs to the body; and from this again will spring desire, the Soul seeking the mending of its instrument.

But, we ask, how, possibly, can these affections pass from body to Soul? Body may communicate qualities or conditions to another body: but- body to Soul? Something happens to A; does that make it happen to B? As long as we have agent and instrument, there are two distinct entities; if the Soul uses the body it is separate from it.

But apart from the philosophical separation how does Soul stand to body?

Clearly there is a combination. And for this several modes are possible. There might be a complete coalescence: Soul might be interwoven through the body: or it might be an Ideal-Form detached or an Ideal-Form in governing contact like a pilot: or there might be part of the Soul detached and another part in contact, the disjoined part being the agent or user, the conjoined part ranking with the instrument or thing used.

In this last case it will be the double task of philosophy to direct this lower Soul towards the higher, the agent, and except in so far as the conjunction is absolutely necessary, to sever the agent from the instrument, the body, so that it need not forever have its Act upon or through this inferior.

4. Let us consider, then, the hypothesis of a coalescence.

Now if there is a coalescence, the lower is ennobled, the nobler degraded; the body is raised in the scale of being as made participant in life; the Soul, as associated with death and unreason, is brought lower. How can a lessening of the life-quality produce an increase such as Sense-Perception?

No: the body has acquired life, it is the body that will acquire, with life, sensation and the affections coming by sensation. Desire, then, will belong to the body, as the objects of desire are to be enjoyed by the body. And fear, too, will belong to the body alone; for it is the body's doom to fail of its joys and to perish.

Then again we should have to examine how such a coalescence could be conceived: we might find it impossible: perhaps all this is like announcing the coalescence of things utterly incongruous in kind, let us say of a line and whiteness.

Next for the suggestion that the Soul is interwoven through the body: such a relation would not give woof and warp community of sensation: the interwoven element might very well suffer no change: the permeating soul might remain entirely untouched by what affects the body- as light goes always free of all it floods- and all the more so, since, precisely, we are asked to consider it as diffused throughout the entire frame.

Under such an interweaving, then, the Soul would not be subjected to the body's affections and experiences: it would be present rather as Ideal-Form in Matter.

Let us then suppose Soul to be in body as Ideal-Form in Matter. Now if- the first possibility- the Soul is an essence, a self-existent, it can be present only as separable form and will therefore all the more decidedly be the Using-Principle [and therefore unaffected].

Suppose, next, the Soul to be present like axe-form on iron: here, no doubt, the form is all important but it is still the axe, the complement of iron and form, that effects whatever is effected by the iron thus modified: on this analogy, therefore, we are even more strictly compelled to assign all the experiences of the combination to the body: their

natural seat is the material member, the instrument, the potential recipient of life.

Compare the passage where we read* that “it is absurd to suppose that the Soul weaves”; equally absurd to think of it as desiring, grieving. All this is rather in the province of something which we may call the Animate.

* “We read” translates “he says” of the text, and always indicates a reference to Plato, whose name does not appear in the translation except where it was written by Plotinus. S.M.

5. Now this Animate might be merely the body as having life: it might be the Couplement of Soul and body: it might be a third and different entity formed from both.

The Soul in turn- apart from the nature of the Animate- must be either impassive, merely causing Sense-Perception in its yoke-fellow, or sympathetic; and, if sympathetic, it may have identical experiences with its fellow or merely correspondent experiences: desire for example in the Animate may be something quite distinct from the accompanying movement or state in the desiring faculty.

The body, the live-body as we know it, we will consider later.

Let us take first the Couplement of body and Soul. How could suffering, for example, be seated in this Couplement?

It may be suggested that some unwelcome state of the body produces a distress which reaches to a Sensitive-Faculty which in turn merges into Soul. But this account still leaves the origin of the sensation unexplained.

Another suggestion might be that all is due to an opinion or judgement: some evil seems to have befallen the man or his belongings and this conviction sets up a state of trouble in the body and in the entire Animate. But this account leaves still a question as to the source and seat of the judgement: does it belong to the Soul or to the Couplement? Besides, the judgement that evil is present does not involve the feeling of grief: the judgement might very well arise and the grief by no means follow: one may think oneself slighted and yet not be angry; and the appetite is not necessarily excited by the thought of a pleasure. We are, thus, no nearer than before to any warrant for assigning these affections to the Couplement.

Is it any explanation to say that desire is vested in a Faculty-of-desire and anger in the Irascible-Faculty and, collectively, that all tendency is seated in the Appetitive-Faculty? Such a statement of the facts does not help towards making the affections common to the Couplement; they might still be seated either in the Soul alone or in the body alone. On the one hand if the appetite is to be stirred, as in the carnal passion, there must be a heating of the blood and the bile, a well-defined state of the body; on the other hand, the impulse towards The Good cannot be a joint affection, but, like certain others too, it would belong necessarily to the Soul alone.

Reason, then, does not permit us to assign all the affections to the Couplement.

In the case of carnal desire, it will certainly be the Man that desires, and yet, on the other hand, there must be desire in the Desiring-Faculty as well. How can this be? Are we to suppose that, when the man originates the desire, the Desiring-Faculty moves to the order? How could the Man have come to desire at all unless through a prior activity in the Desiring-Faculty? Then it is the Desiring-Faculty that takes the lead? Yet how, unless the body be first in the appropriate condition?

6. It may seem reasonable to lay down as a law that when any powers are contained by a recipient, every action or state expressive of them must be the action or state of that recipient, they themselves remaining unaffected as merely furnishing efficiency.

But if this were so, then, since the Animate is the recipient of the Causing-Principle [i.e., the Soul] which brings life to the Couplement, this Cause must itself remain unaffected, all the experiences and expressive activities of the life being vested in the recipient, the Animate.

But this would mean that life itself belongs not to the Soul but to the Couplement; or at least the life of the Couplement would not be the life of the Soul; Sense-Perception would belong not to the Sensitive-Faculty but to the container of the faculty.

But if sensation is a movement traversing the body and culminating in Soul, how the soul lack sensation? The very presence of the Sensitive-Faculty must assure sensation to the Soul.

Once again, where is Sense-Perception seated?

In the Couplement.

Yet how can the Couplement have sensation independently of action in the Sensitive-Faculty, the Soul left out of count and the Soul-Faculty?

7. The truth lies in the Consideration that the Couplement subsists by virtue of the Soul's presence.

This, however, is not to say that the Soul gives itself as it is in itself to form either the Couplement or the body.

No; from the organized body and something else, let us say a light, which the Soul gives forth from itself, it forms a distinct Principle, the Animate; and in this Principle are vested Sense-Perception and all the other experiences found to belong to the Animate.

But the "We"? How have We Sense-Perception?

By the fact that We are not separate from the Animate so constituted, even though certainly other and nobler elements go to make up the entire many-sided nature of Man.

The faculty of perception in the Soul cannot act by the immediate grasping of sensible objects, but only by the discerning of impressions printed upon the Animate by sensation: these impressions are already Intelligibles while the outer sensation is a mere phantom of the other [of that in the Soul] which is nearer to Authentic-Existence as being an impassive reading of Ideal-Forms.

And by means of these Ideal-Forms, by which the Soul wields single lordship over the Animate, we have Discursive-Reasoning, Sense-Knowledge and Intellection. From this moment we have peculiarly the We: before this there was only the "Ours"; but at this stage stands the WE [the authentic Human-Principle] loftily presiding over the Animate.

There is no reason why the entire compound entity should not be described as the Animate or Living-Being- mingled in a lower phase, but above that point the beginning of the veritable man, distinct from all that is kin to the lion, all that is of the order of the multiple brute. And since The Man, so understood, is essentially the associate of the reasoning Soul, in our reasoning it is this "We" that reasons, in that the use and act of reason is a characteristic Act of the Soul.

8. And towards the Intellectual-Principle what is our relation? By this I mean, not that faculty in the soul which is one of the emanations from the Intellectual-Principle, but The Intellectual-Principle itself [Divine-Mind].

This also we possess as the summit of our being. And we have It either as common to all or as our own immediate possession: or again we may possess It in both degrees, that is in common, since It is indivisible- one, everywhere and always Its entire self- and severally in that each personality possesses It entire in the First-Soul [i.e. in the Intellectual as distinguished from the lower phase of the Soul].

Hence we possess the Ideal-Forms also after two modes: in the Soul, as it were unrolled and separate; in the Intellectual-Principle, concentrated, one.

And how do we possess the Divinity?

In that the Divinity is contained in the Intellectual-Principle and Authentic-Existence; and We come third in order after these two, for the We is constituted by a union of the supreme, the undivided Soul- we read- and that Soul which is divided among [living] bodies. For, note, we inevitably think of the Soul, though one undivided in the All, as being present to bodies in division: in so far as any bodies are Animates, the Soul has given itself to each of the separate material masses; or rather it appears to be present in the bodies by the fact that it shines into them: it makes them living beings not by merging into body but by giving forth, without any change in itself, images or likenesses of itself like one face caught by many mirrors.

The first of these images is Sense-Perception seated in the Couplement; and from this downwards all the successive images are to be recognized as phases of the Soul in lessening succession from one another, until the series ends in the faculties of

generation and growth and of all production of offspring- offspring efficient in its turn, in contradistinction to the engendering Soul which [has no direct action within matter but] produces by mere inclination towards what it fashions.

9. That Soul, then, in us, will in its nature stand apart from all that can cause any of the evils which man does or suffers; for all such evil, as we have seen, belongs only to the Animate, the Couplement.

But there is a difficulty in understanding how the Soul can go guiltless if our mentation and reasoning are vested in it: for all this lower kind of knowledge is delusion and is the cause of much of what is evil.

When we have done evil it is because we have been worsted by our baser side- for a man is many- by desire or rage or some evil image: the misnamed reasoning that takes up with the false, in reality fancy, has not stayed for the judgement of the Reasoning-Principle: we have acted at the call of the less worthy, just as in matters of the sense-sphere we sometimes see falsely because we credit only the lower perception, that of the Couplement, without applying the tests of the Reasoning-Faculty.

The Intellectual-Principle has held aloof from the act and so is guiltless; or, as we may state it, all depends on whether we ourselves have or have not put ourselves in touch with the Intellectual-Realm either in the Intellectual-Principle or within ourselves; for it is possible at once to possess and not to use.

Thus we have marked off what belongs to the Couplement from what stands by itself: the one group has the character of body and never exists apart from body, while all that has no need of body for its manifestation belongs peculiarly to Soul: and the Understanding, as passing judgement upon Sense-Impressions, is at the point of the vision of Ideal-Forms, seeing them as it were with an answering sensation (i.e, with consciousness) this last is at any rate true of the Understanding in the Veritable Soul. For Understanding, the true, is the Act of the Intellections: in many of its manifestations it is the assimilation and reconciliation of the outer to the inner.

Thus in spite of all, the Soul is at peace as to itself and within itself: all the changes and all the turmoil we experience are the issue of what is subjoined to the Soul, and are, as have said, the states and experiences of this elusive "Couplement."

10. It will be objected, that if the Soul constitutes the We [the personality] and We are subject to these states then the Soul must be subject to them, and similarly that what We do must be done by the Soul.

But it has been observed that the Couplement, too- especially before our emancipation- is a member of this total We, and in fact what the body experiences we say We experience. This then covers two distinct notions; sometimes it includes the brute-part, sometimes it transcends the brute. The body is brute touched to life; the true man is the other, going pure of the body, natively endowed with the virtues which belong to the Intellectual-Activity, virtues whose seat is the Separate Soul, the Soul which even in its

dwelling here may be kept apart. [This Soul constitutes the human being] for when it has wholly withdrawn, that other Soul which is a radiation [or emanation] from it withdraws also, drawn after it.

Those virtues, on the other hand, which spring not from contemplative wisdom but from custom or practical discipline belong to the Couplement: to the Couplement, too, belong the vices; they are its repugnances, desires, sympathies.

And Friendship?

This emotion belongs sometimes to the lower part, sometimes to the interior man.

11. In childhood the main activity is in the Couplement and there is but little irradiation from the higher principles of our being: but when these higher principles act but feebly or rarely upon us their action is directed towards the Supreme; they work upon us only when they stand at the mid-point.

But does not the include that phase of our being which stands above the mid-point?

It does, but on condition that we lay hold of it: our entire nature is not ours at all times but only as we direct the mid-point upwards or downwards, or lead some particular phase of our nature from potentiality or native character into act.

And the animals, in what way or degree do they possess the Animate?

If there be in them, as the opinion goes, human Souls that have sinned, then the Animating-Principle in its separable phase does not enter directly into the brute; it is there but not there to them; they are aware only of the image of the Soul [only of the lower Soul] and of that only by being aware of the body organised and determined by that image.

If there be no human Soul in them, the Animate is constituted for them by a radiation from the All-Soul.

12. But if Soul is sinless, how come the expiations? Here surely is a contradiction; on the one side the Soul is above all guilt; on the other, we hear of its sin, its purification, its expiation; it is doomed to the lower world, it passes from body to body.

We may take either view at will: they are easily reconciled.

When we tell of the sinless Soul, we make Soul and Essential-Soul one and the same: it is the simple unbroken Unity.

By the Soul subject to sin we indicate a groupment, we include that other, that phase of the Soul which knows all the states and passions: the Soul in this sense is compound, all-inclusive: it falls under the conditions of the entire living experience: this compound it is that sins; it is this, and not the other, that pays penalty.

It is in this sense that we read of the Soul: "We saw it as those others saw the sea-god Glaucos." "And," reading on, "if we mean to discern the nature of the Soul we must strip it free of all that has gathered about it, must see into the philosophy of it, examine with what Existences it has touch and by kinship to what Existences it is what it is."

Thus the Life is one thing, the Act is another and the Expiator yet another. The retreat and sundering, then, must be not from this body only, but from every alien accrument. Such accrument takes place at birth; or rather birth is the coming-into-being of that other [lower] phase of the Soul. For the meaning of birth has been indicated elsewhere; it is brought about by a descent of the Soul, something being given off by the Soul other than that actually coming down in the declension.

Then the Soul has let this image fall? And this declension is it not certainly sin?

If the declension is no more than the illuminating of an object beneath, it constitutes no sin: the shadow is to be attributed not to the luminary but to the object illuminated; if the object were not there, the light could cause no shadow.

And the Soul is said to go down, to decline, only in that the object it illuminates lives by its life. And it lets the image fall only if there be nothing near to take it up; and it lets it fall, not as a thing cut off, but as a thing that ceases to be: the image has no further being when the whole Soul is looking toward the Supreme.

The poet, too, in the story of Hercules, seems to give this image separate existence; he puts the shade of Hercules in the lower world and Hercules himself among the gods: treating the hero as existing in the two realms at once, he gives us a twofold Hercules.

It is not difficult to explain this distinction. Hercules was a hero of practical virtue. By his noble serviceableness he was worthy to be a God. On the other hand, his merit was action and not the Contemplation which would place him unreservedly in the higher realm. Therefore while he has place above, something of him remains below.

13. And the principle that reasons out these matters? Is it We or the Soul?

We, but by the Soul.

But how "by the Soul"? Does this mean that the Soul reasons by possession [by contact with the matters of enquiry]?

No; by the fact of being Soul. Its Act subsists without movement; or any movement that can be ascribed to it must be utterly distinct from all corporal movement and be simply the Soul's own life.

And Intellection in us is twofold: since the Soul is intellective, and Intellection is the highest phase of life, we have Intellection both by the characteristic Act of our Soul and by the Act of the Intellectual-Principle upon us- for this Intellectual-Principle is part of us

no less than the Soul, and towards it we are ever rising.

SECOND TRACTATE.

ON VIRTUE.

1. Since Evil is here, "haunting this world by necessary law," and it is the Soul's design to escape from Evil, we must escape hence.

But what is this escape?

"In attaining Likeness to God," we read. And this is explained as "becoming just and holy, living by wisdom," the entire nature grounded in Virtue.

But does not Likeness by way of Virtue imply Likeness to some being that has Virtue? To what Divine Being, then, would our Likeness be? To the Being- must we not think?- in Which, above all, such excellence seems to inhere, that is to the Soul of the Kosmos and to the Principle ruling within it, the Principle endowed with a wisdom most wonderful. What could be more fitting than that we, living in this world, should become Like to its ruler?

But, at the beginning, we are met by the doubt whether even in this Divine-Being all the virtues find place- Moral-Balance [Sophrosyne], for example; or Fortitude where there can be no danger since nothing is alien; where there can be nothing alluring whose lack could induce the desire of possession.

If, indeed, that aspiration towards the Intelligible which is in our nature exists also in this Ruling-Power, then need not look elsewhere for the source of order and of the virtues in ourselves.

But does this Power possess the Virtues?

We cannot expect to find There what are called the Civic Virtues, the Prudence which belongs to the reasoning faculty; the Fortitude which conducts the emotional and passionate nature; the Sophrosyne which consists in a certain pact, in a concord between the passionate faculty and the reason; or Rectitude which is the due application of all the other virtues as each in turn should command or obey.

Is Likeness, then, attained, perhaps, not by these virtues of the social order but by those greater qualities known by the same general name? And if so do the Civic Virtues give us no help at all?

It is against reason, utterly to deny Likeness by these while admitting it by the greater: tradition at least recognizes certain men of the civic excellence as divine, and we must believe that these too had in some sort attained Likeness: on both levels there is virtue for us, though not the same virtue.

Now, if it be admitted that Likeness is possible, though by a varying use of different virtues and though the civic virtues do not suffice, there is no reason why we should not, by virtues peculiar to our state, attain Likeness to a model in which virtue has no place.

But is that conceivable?

When warmth comes in to make anything warm, must there needs be something to warm the source of the warmth?

If a fire is to warm something else, must there be a fire to warm that fire?

Against the first illustration it may be retorted that the source of the warmth does already contain warmth, not by an infusion but as an essential phase of its nature, so that, if the analogy is to hold, the argument would make Virtue something communicated to the Soul but an essential constituent of the Principle from which the Soul attaining Likeness absorbs it.

Against the illustration drawn from the fire, it may be urged that the analogy would make that Principle identical with virtue, whereas we hold it to be something higher.

The objection would be valid if what the soul takes in were one and the same with the source, but in fact virtue is one thing, the source of virtue quite another. The material house is not identical with the house conceived in the intellect, and yet stands in its likeness: the material house has distribution and order while the pure idea is not constituted by any such elements; distribution, order, symmetry are not parts of an idea.

So with us: it is from the Supreme that we derive order and distribution and harmony, which are virtues in this sphere: the Existences There, having no need of harmony, order or distribution, have nothing to do with virtue; and, none the less, it is by our possession of virtue that we become like to Them.

Thus much to show that the principle that we attain Likeness by virtue in no way involves the existence of virtue in the Supreme. But we have not merely to make a formal demonstration: we must persuade as well as demonstrate.

2. First, then, let us examine those good qualities by which we hold Likeness comes, and seek to establish what is this thing which, as we possess it, in transcription, is virtue but as the Supreme possesses it, is in the nature of an exemplar or archetype and is not virtue.

We must first distinguish two modes of Likeness.

There is the likeness demanding an identical nature in the objects which, further, must draw their likeness from a common principle: and there is the case in which B resembles A, but A is a Primal, not concerned about B and not said to resemble B. In this second case, likeness is understood in a distinct sense: we no longer look for identity of nature, but, on the contrary, for divergence since the likeness has come

about by the mode of difference.

What, then, precisely is Virtue, collectively and in the particular? The clearer method will be to begin with the particular, for so the common element by which all the forms hold the general name will readily appear.

The Civic Virtues, on which we have touched above, are a principle of order and beauty in us as long as we remain passing our life here: they ennoble us by setting bound and measure to our desires and to our entire sensibility, and dispelling false judgement- and this by sheer efficacy of the better, by the very setting of the bounds, by the fact that the measured is lifted outside of the sphere of the unmeasured and lawless.

And, further, these Civic Virtues- measured and ordered themselves and acting as a principle of measure to the Soul which is as Matter to their forming- are like to the measure reigning in the over-world, and they carry a trace of that Highest Good in the Supreme; for, while utter measurelessness is brute Matter and wholly outside of Likeness, any participation in Ideal-Form produces some corresponding degree of Likeness to the formless Being There. And participation goes by nearness: the Soul nearer than the body, therefore closer akin, participates more fully and shows a godlike presence, almost cheating us into the delusion that in the Soul we see God entire.

This is the way in which men of the Civic Virtues attain Likeness.

3. We come now to that other mode of Likeness which, we read, is the fruit of the loftier virtues: discussing this we shall penetrate more deeply into the essence of the Civic Virtue and be able to define the nature of the higher kind whose existence we shall establish beyond doubt.

To Plato, unmistakably, there are two distinct orders of virtue, and the civic does not suffice for Likeness: "Likeness to God," he says, "is a flight from this world's ways and things": in dealing with the qualities of good citizenship he does not use the simple term Virtue but adds the distinguishing word civic: and elsewhere he declares all the virtues without exception to be purifications.

But in what sense can we call the virtues purifications, and how does purification issue in Likeness?

As the Soul is evil by being interfused with the body, and by coming to share the body's states and to think the body's thoughts, so it would be good, it would be possessed of virtue, if it threw off the body's moods and devoted itself to its own Act- the state of Intellection and Wisdom- never allowed the passions of the body to affect it- the virtue of Sophrosyne- knew no fear at the parting from the body- the virtue of Fortitude- and if reason and the Intellectual-Principle ruled- in which state is Righteousness. Such a disposition in the Soul, become thus intellective and immune to passion, it would not be wrong to call Likeness to God; for the Divine, too, is pure and the Divine-Act is such that Likeness to it is Wisdom.

But would not this make virtue a state of the Divine also?

No: the Divine has no states; the state is in the Soul. The Act of Intellection in the Soul is not the same as in the Divine: of things in the Supreme, Soul grasps some after a mode of its own, some not at all.

Then yet again, the one word Intellection covers two distinct Acts?

Rather there is primal Intellection and there is Intellection deriving from the Primal and of other scope.

As speech is the echo of the thought in the Soul, so thought in the Soul is an echo from elsewhere: that is to say, as the uttered thought is an image of the soul-thought, so the soul-thought images a thought above itself and is the interpreter of the higher sphere.

Virtue, in the same way, is a thing of the Soul: it does not belong to the Intellectual-Principle or to the Transcendence.

4. We come, so, to the question whether Purification is the whole of this human quality, virtue, or merely the forerunner upon which virtue follows? Does virtue imply the achieved state of purification or does the mere process suffice to it, Virtue being something of less perfection than the accomplished pureness which is almost the Term?

To have been purified is to have cleansed away everything alien: but Goodness is something more.

If before the impurity entered there was Goodness, the Goodness suffices; but even so, not the act of cleansing but the cleansed thing that emerges will be The Good. And it remains to establish what this emergent is.

It can scarcely prove to be The Good: The Absolute Good cannot be thought to have taken up its abode with Evil. We can think of it only as something of the nature of good but paying a double allegiance and unable to rest in the Authentic Good.

The Soul's true Good is in devotion to the Intellectual-Principle, its kin; evil to the Soul lies in frequenting strangers. There is no other way for it than to purify itself and so enter into relation with its own; the new phase begins by a new orientation.

After the Purification, then, there is still this orientation to be made? No: by the purification the true alignment stands accomplished.

The Soul's virtue, then, is this alignment? No: it is what the alignment brings about within.

And this is...?

That it sees; that, like sight affected by the thing seen, the soul admits the imprint, graven upon it and working within it, of the vision it has come to.

But was not the Soul possessed of all this always, or had it forgotten?

What it now sees, it certainly always possessed, but as lying away in the dark, not as acting within it: to dispel the darkness, and thus come to knowledge of its inner content, it must thrust towards the light.

Besides, it possessed not the originals but images, pictures; and these it must bring into closer accord with the verities they represent. And, further, if the Intellectual-Principle is said to be a possession of the Soul, this is only in the sense that It is not alien and that the link becomes very close when the Soul's sight is turned towards It: otherwise, ever-present though It be, It remains foreign, just as our knowledge, if it does not determine action, is dead to us.

5. So we come to the scope of the purification: that understood, the nature of Likeness becomes clear. Likeness to what Principle? Identity with what God?

The question is substantially this: how far does purification dispel the two orders of passion- anger, desire and the like, with grief and its kin- and in what degree the disengagement from the body is possible.

Disengagement means simply that the soul withdraws to its own place.

It will hold itself above all passions and affections. Necessary pleasures and all the activity of the senses it will employ only for medicament and assuagement lest its work be impeded. Pain it may combat, but, failing the cure, it will bear meekly and ease it by refusing assent to it. All passionate action it will check: the suppression will be complete if that be possible, but at worst the Soul will never itself take fire but will keep the involuntary and uncontrolled outside its precincts and rare and weak at that. The Soul has nothing to dread, though no doubt the involuntary has some power here too: fear therefore must cease, except so far as it is purely monitory. What desire there may be can never be for the vile; even the food and drink necessary for restoration will lie outside of the Soul's attention, and not less the sexual appetite: or if such desire there must be, it will turn upon the actual needs of the nature and be entirely under control; or if any uncontrolled motion takes place, it will reach no further than the imagination, be no more than a fleeting fancy.

The Soul itself will be inviolately free and will be working to set the irrational part of the nature above all attack, or if that may not be, then at least to preserve it from violent assault, so that any wound it takes may be slight and be healed at once by virtue of the Soul's presence, just as a man living next door to a Sage would profit by the neighbourhood, either in becoming wise and good himself or, for sheer shame, never venturing any act which the nobler mind would disapprove.

There will be no battling in the Soul: the mere intervention of Reason is enough: the

lower nature will stand in such awe of Reason that for any slightest movement it has made it will grieve, and censure its own weakness, in not having kept low and still in the presence of its lord.

6. In all this there is no sin- there is only matter of discipline- but our concern is not merely to be sinless but to be God.

As long as there is any such involuntary action, the nature is twofold, God and Demi-God, or rather God in association with a nature of a lower power: when all the involuntary is suppressed, there is God unmingled, a Divine Being of those that follow upon The First.

For, at this height, the man is the very being that came from the Supreme. The primal excellence restored, the essential man is There: entering this sphere, he has associated himself with the reasoning phase of his nature and this he will lead up into likeness with his highest self, as far as earthly mind is capable, so that if possible it shall never be inclined to, and at the least never adopt, any course displeasing to its overlord.

What form, then, does virtue take in one so lofty?

It appears as Wisdom, which consists in the contemplation of all that exists in the Intellectual-Principle, and as the immediate presence of the Intellectual-Principle itself.

And each of these has two modes or aspects: there is Wisdom as it is in the Intellectual-Principle and as in the Soul; and there is the Intellectual-Principle as it is present to itself and as it is present to the Soul: this gives what in the Soul is Virtue, in the Supreme not Virtue.

In the Supreme, then, what is it?

Its proper Act and Its Essence.

That Act and Essence of the Supreme, manifested in a new form, constitute the virtue of this sphere. For the Supreme is not self-existent justice, or the Absolute of any defined virtue: it is, so to speak, an exemplar, the source of what in the soul becomes virtue: for virtue is dependent, seated in something not itself; the Supreme is self-standing, independent.

But taking Rectitude to be the due ordering of faculty, does it not always imply the existence of diverse parts?

No: There is a Rectitude of Diversity appropriate to what has parts, but there is another, not less Rectitude than the former though it resides in a Unity. And the authentic Absolute-Rectitude is the Act of a Unity upon itself, of a Unity in which there is no this and that and the other.

On this principle, the supreme Rectitude of the Soul is that it direct its Act towards the

Intellectual-Principle: its Restraint (Sophrosyne) is its inward bending towards the Intellectual-Principle; its Fortitude is its being impassive in the likeness of That towards which its gaze is set, Whose nature comports an impassivity which the Soul acquires by virtue and must acquire if it is not to be at the mercy of every state arising in its less noble companion.

7. The virtues in the Soul run in a sequence correspondent to that existing in the over-world, that is among their exemplars in the Intellectual-Principle.

In the Supreme, Intellection constitutes Knowledge and Wisdom; self-concentration is Sophrosyne; Its proper Act is Its Dutifulness; Its Immateriality, by which It remains inviolate within Itself is the equivalent of Fortitude.

In the Soul, the direction of vision towards the Intellectual-Principle is Wisdom and Prudence, soul-virtues not appropriate to the Supreme where Thinker and Thought are identical. All the other virtues have similar correspondences.

And if the term of purification is the production of a pure being, then the purification of the Soul must produce all the virtues; if any are lacking, then not one of them is perfect.

And to possess the greater is potentially to possess the minor, though the minor need not carry the greater with them.

Thus we have indicated the dominant note in the life of the Sage; but whether his possession of the minor virtues be actual as well as potential, whether even the greater are in Act in him or yield to qualities higher still, must be decided afresh in each several case.

Take, for example, Contemplative-Wisdom. If other guides of conduct must be called in to meet a given need, can this virtue hold its ground even in mere potentiality?

And what happens when the virtues in their very nature differ in scope and province? Where, for example, Sophrosyne would allow certain acts or emotions under due restraint and another virtue would cut them off altogether? And is it not clear that all may have to yield, once Contemplative-Wisdom comes into action?

The solution is in understanding the virtues and what each has to give: thus the man will learn to work with this or that as every several need demands. And as he reaches to loftier principles and other standards these in turn will define his conduct: for example, Restraint in its earlier form will no longer satisfy him; he will work for the final Disengagement; he will live, no longer, the human life of the good man- such as Civic Virtue commends- but, leaving this beneath him, will take up instead another life, that of the Gods.

For it is to the Gods, not to the Good, that our Likeness must look: to model ourselves upon good men is to produce an image of an image: we have to fix our gaze above the image and attain Likeness to the Supreme Exemplar.

THIRD TRACTATE.

ON DIALECTIC [THE UPWARD WAY].

1. What art is there, what method, what discipline to bring us there where we must go?

The Term at which we must arrive we may take as agreed: we have established elsewhere, by many considerations, that our journey is to the Good, to the Primal-Principle; and, indeed, the very reasoning which discovered the Term was itself something like an initiation.

But what order of beings will attain the Term?

Surely, as we read, those that have already seen all or most things, those who at their first birth have entered into the life-germ from which is to spring a metaphysician, a musician or a born lover, the metaphysician taking to the path by instinct, the musician and the nature peculiarly susceptible to love needing outside guidance.

But how lies the course? Is it alike for all, or is there a distinct method for each class of temperament?

For all there are two stages of the path, as they are making upwards or have already gained the upper sphere.

The first degree is the conversion from the lower life; the second- held by those that have already made their way to the sphere of the Intelligibles, have set as it were a footprint there but must still advance within the realm- lasts until they reach the extreme hold of the place, the Term attained when the topmost peak of the Intellectual realm is won.

But this highest degree must bide its time: let us first try to speak of the initial process of conversion.

We must begin by distinguishing the three types. Let us take the musician first and indicate his temperamental equipment for the task.

The musician we may think of as being exceedingly quick to beauty, drawn in a very rapture to it: somewhat slow to stir of his own impulse, he answers at once to the outer stimulus: as the timid are sensitive to noise so he to tones and the beauty they convey; all that offends against unison or harmony in melodies and rhythms repels him; he longs for measure and shapely pattern.

This natural tendency must be made the starting-point to such a man; he must be drawn by the tone, rhythm and design in things of sense: he must learn to distinguish the material forms from the Authentic-Existent which is the source of all these correspondences and of the entire reasoned scheme in the work of art: he must be led